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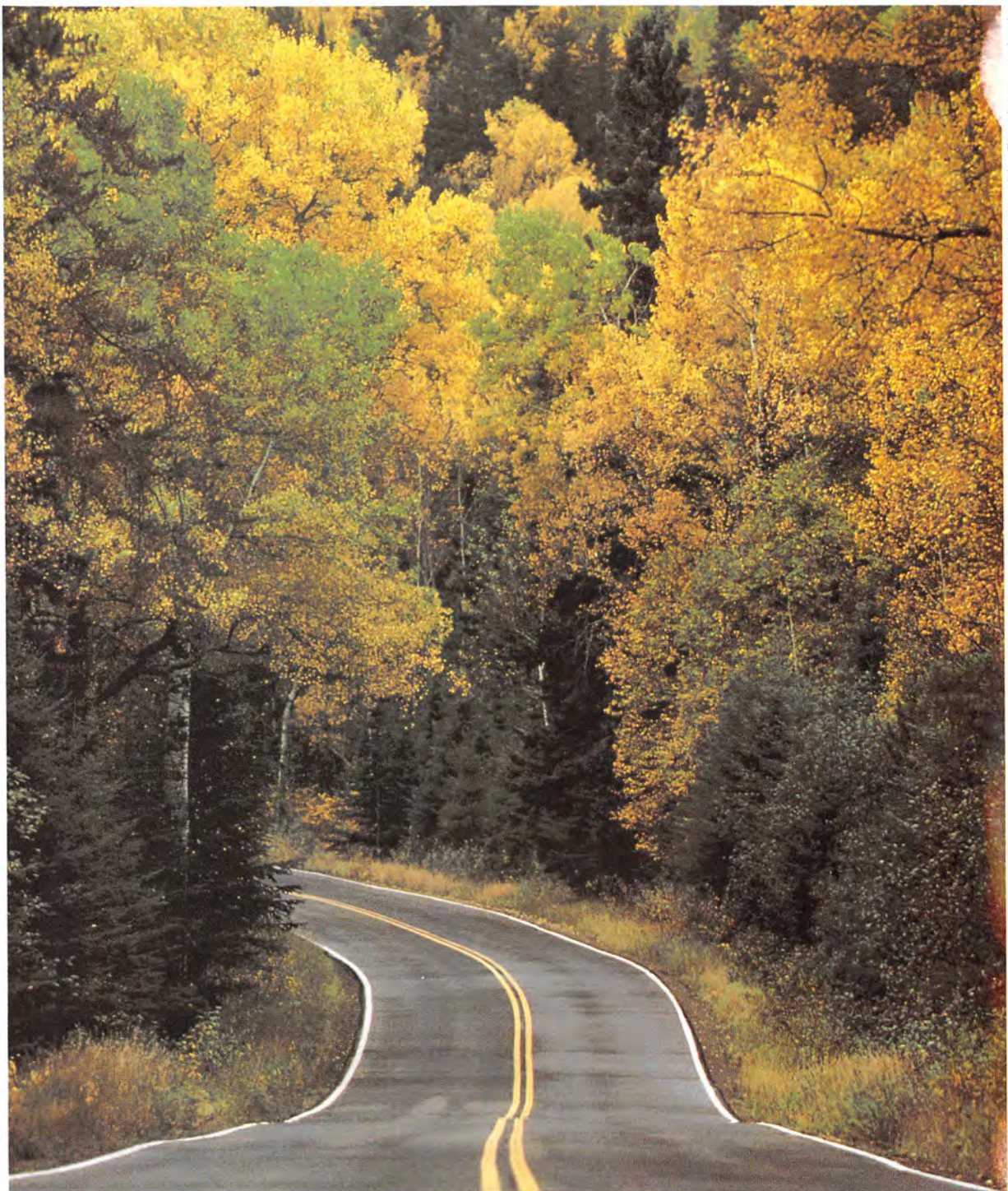
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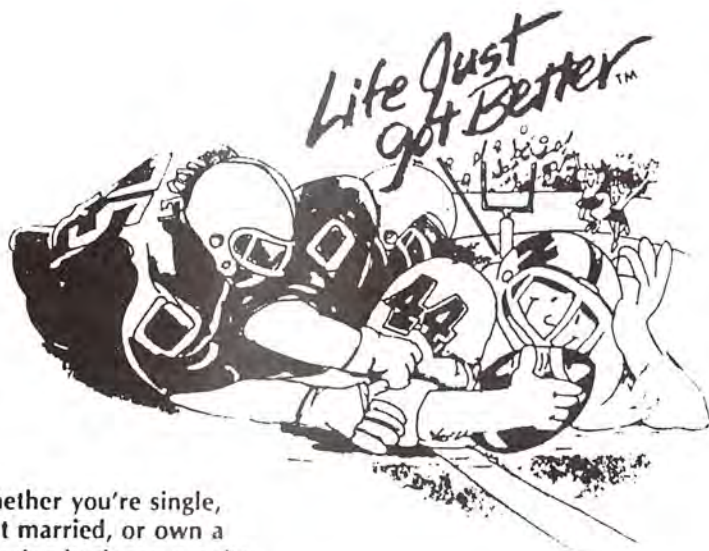
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LETTERS

NEBRASKA NINERS

Dear Huskers:

My brother and I think the San Francisco 49ers are the best team in the NFL because they have three Huskers playing for them. We would like to know how many Nebraska players are in the NFL. Thank you.

Craig Kripal
Fremont, Neb.

Craig: The last time we checked, there were 19 Cornhuskers on active rosters in the National Football League and three or four others on the injured reserve list.

Those who were active included: Roger Craig, Tom Rathman and Doug DuBose, San Francisco 49ers; Mike Rozier, Dean Steinkuhler and Jamie Williams, Houston Oilers; Irving Fryar

and Toby Williams, New England Patriots; Bret Clark, Atlanta Falcons; Keith Jones, Los Angeles Rams; Bill Lewis, Los Angeles Raiders; Jimmy Williams, Detroit Lions; Neil Smith, Kansas City Chiefs; Jeff Smith, Tampa Bay Bucs; Jim Skow, Cincinnati Bengals; Brian Washington, Cleveland Browns; Brian Davis, Washington Redskins; Dave Rimington, Philadelphia Eagles; and Danny Noonan, Dallas Cowboys.

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Dear Huskers:

I like the "Report Card" you include with the weekly scouting report of Husker opponents. But I think you should have given Kansas State a higher grade for their ends.

Adrian Copple
Eugene, Ore.

PASSING FANCY

Dear Huskers:

Weren't Vince Ferragamo and Dave Humm passing quarterbacks? When did Nebraska become a running team?

Is Steve Taylor the best quarterback Nebraska's ever had?

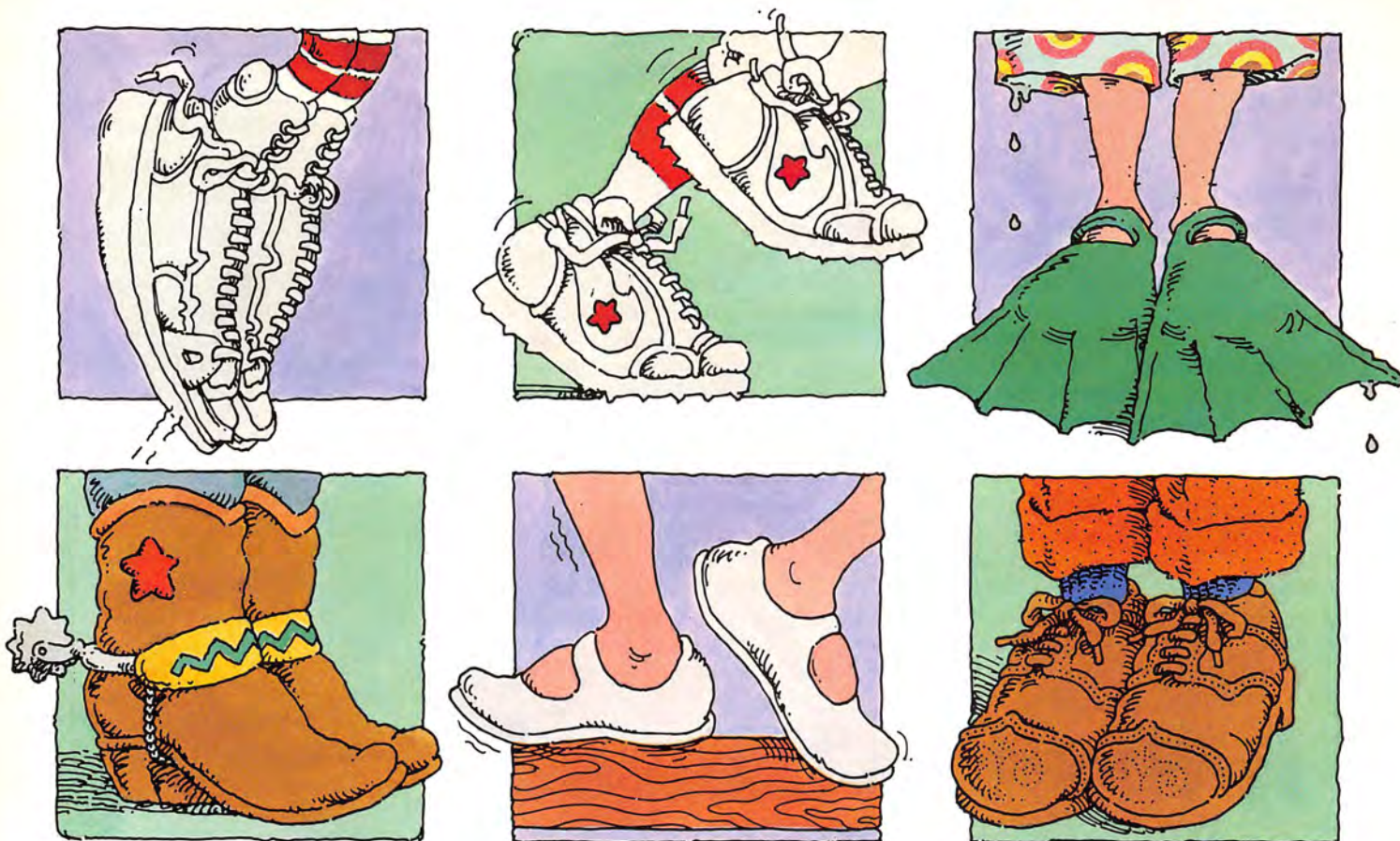
Roy Donnell
Alexandria, La.

Roy: The Cornhuskers led the Big Eight in passing once or twice in the early years of the Osborne era. Nebraska began to rely on a more balanced attack, running and passing, during the late 1970s. Turner Gill was probably the Cornhuskers' first top-notch option quarterback.

Osborne discusses the change in offensive philosophy in his book *More Than Winning*. Among other things, he writes: "Now we seldom recruit a quarterback who can't run 4.7 or better (in the 40-yard dash)."

Steve Taylor certainly ranks among the best quarterbacks Nebraska has had. Osborne will tell you that. But the best? That's subjective, of course.

We want to hear your comments and answer your questions. Address them to "Letters," P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, NE 68501. ■



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It was only last September that nobody could blame Oklahoma for having a wait-till-1989 attitude. Banished to the second half of the Top 20 after losing to Southern Cal, the young Sooners had enough problems to stock TV soap operas with melodramatic material for a year. Call it "General Hospital." Star players were hurt. Replacement players were carded going into PG-13 movies. The old battle cry "hang half-a-hundred!" seemed to refer more to rushing yards per quarter than points per game. OU went five weeks before using the same starters in the offensive line twice. The offense was supposed to be so great it could carry the inexperienced

defense. Guess who carried who? In a four-week stretch, Oklahoma averaged 14 first downs a game, and the young defenders were getting sore backs. If the American public had the same feelings for those trapped whales near Alaska as some OU fans had for the wishbone, those whales would be on the ocean floor.

Things have changed.

Injured stars have healed, the defense has gotten even better and the wishbone is no longer on the endangered species list among restless Sooner fans. The natives are no longer restless. With only two senior starters on offense and four on defense, Oklahoma has become quite

good despite its youth, perhaps *because* of its youth.

Consistent all year, OU's defense gets the nod by many as the Big Eight's best even though that may be partly by default because of two unusual 40-point lapses by the Black Shirts as well as Colorado's inconsistency and Oklahoma State's civic-minded battle cry, "just say no to defense."

Certainly, Oklahoma State got over 450 yards on the Sooners, but the Cowboys only scored four touchdowns despite getting all-star performances from Barry Sanders and Hart Lee Dykes. Barry Switzer left Stillwater with praise for his defense.

The improvement that has OU confident again is on offense, where quarterback Charles Thompson has given rise to the question, "Jamelle who?"

Holieway, by the way, is healthy and still a capable player. Halfback Mike Gaddis has not quite boggled OU supporters into asking "Billy who?"

Sims is a Sooner legend. Gaddis could be.

Plus, the offensive line has finally stabilized, and injuries everywhere are healing.

In a year when OSU and Colorado have proven to be about as good as expected or even a little better, the Sooners escaped foreign soil in both cases with victories. Admittedly, CU could have tied OU with a late, 62-yard field goal, and O-State was only a botched catch in the end zone away from winning, but the Sooners have proven to also be about as good as expected — better on defense. And after major reconstructive surgery, the wishbone lives.

Here's a look at the '88 Oklahoma Sooners.

Quarterback: Thompson (5-10, 175, so.) has taken over for Holieway, who started earlier this season but lost his job because of an ankle injury. Holieway's ankle is now fine, but it is obvious he's lost speed and agility as a result of 1987 knee surgery.

Thompson, however, has been an outstanding replacement. He leads the Sooners in rushing, runs like a sprint champ, makes decent decisions at the line and holds up to punishment. Thompson got 126 yards on 21 carries

It Hasn't Changed

DESPITE EARLY SEASON PROBLEMS, OKLAHOMA FIELDS ANOTHER DEADLY SQUAD.



Sophomore QB Charles Thompson (6) has replaced Jamelle Holieway.

against the Huskers last year as a red-shirt freshman. He's running as well, if not better, this year.

His passing isn't better, though. Thompson is hitting less than 40 percent of his attempts. When OU was forced to pass against Southern Cal, Thompson was a modest 4-12 with three interceptions.

Holieway will help in that case. He's hitting over 60 percent of his passes and is still a remarkably reliable player. Should Thompson suffer an injury, Holieway's presence will dramatically alter the wishbone attack, which can't stand the drain of a quarterback who averages less than 3 yards per carry, which Holieway does. With Thompson out, OU probably would emphasize straight handoffs and pitches instead of triple options.

Overall, quarterback is a bright spot for Oklahoma although four quarters of Holieway might weaken the wishbone.

Running backs: OU's running attack would be strong even with Rodney Dangerfield at quarterback as long as halfbacks Gaddis (6-2, 205, fr.) and Anthony Stafford (5-7, 175, sr.) get the ball. Gaddis demolished Oklahoma State with 215 rushing yards, and he was averaging 10 yards a carry against Colorado until he injured his neck. Back to 100 percent, Gaddis appears to be OU's budding star. Switzer has raved about the redshirt freshman and compared him to Sims, OU's last Heisman Trophy winner. Plus, he blocks well.

Stafford has all-the-way speed and showed it with an 86-yard touchdown against Texas. He suffered a knee injury against Colorado but appears to be healthy. Because of Thompson, Gaddis and Stafford, OU's backfield may even be better than last year's.

Fullback: Leon Perry (6-1, 223, jr.) only adds evidence to that better-backfield theory. He's gotten tough yards all year and is also an excellent receiver. In fact, Oklahoma has thrown almost as many passes to its backs as it has to receivers. Rotnei Anderson (6-1, 212, sr.) is the backup. He was forced to start against the Huskers last year because of injuries to Lydell Carr, and Anderson responded with 119 yards rushing...and scads of fumbles. However, Anderson hasn't fumbled

Tackle Scott Evans (78) is the leader of a young but talented defense.



much this year.

Overall, the OU wishbone again looks dangerous.

Offensive line: Sooner backs have had to work harder than in recent years because of interior blocking. Only (6-3, 285, sr.) Anthony Phillips remains from the 1987 unit, and his Lombardi Trophy nomination backs up his 1988 performance. However, the rest of the offensive line is a step down from recent Sooner editions. They're still good, but injuries have kept this young crew (two sophomores, two juniors and a senior) from making a lot of progress. Oklahoma coaches feel comfortable the physical talent is there, but repetitions in practice and games are critical to line play, and this group hasn't had much until recently.

All-Big Eight center Bob Latham (6-5, 265, sr.) has been injured almost the whole season but should be ready for the Huskers. The unanswered question is whether or not a healthy but rusty Latham will be better than the experienced but less talented replacement, Mike Wise (6-6, 270, jr.), who has been adequate.

Receivers: This position has been a headache all year. Ravaged by injuries and academic casualties at tight end, Sooner coaches moved starting defen-

sive end Adrian Cooper (6-6, 250, so.) to the position once occupied by three-year phenom Keith Jackson. Cooper is slightly more dangerous than the offensive linemen who were converted to tight ends earlier in 1988. Southern Cal's safeties totally ignored the OU tight end and turned Oklahoma's running lanes on the perimeter into war zones. USC won, limiting OU to less than 89 yards rushing.

Walkon Eric Bross (6-2, 194, jr.) is the starting wideout, a term that's more accurate than wide receiver. When program vendors at Sooner games say you can't tell the players without a lineup card, they stand unchallenged at this position. Bross went three games without catching a pass after snaring 10 in the first four games. With a non-Jackson tight end and their traditionally bland split end, the Sooners possess an average receiving corps.

Defensive line: Right tackle Scott Evans (6-3, 251, so.) gets reviews from Sooner coaches as a solid choice as the best defensive tackle in the Big Eight. He's third on the team (trailing two linebackers) in total tackles, and he's close to leading the league in tackles behind the line. Strong against the run and on the pass rush, Evans is a force.

Rapidly improving Curtice Williams

(6-3, 280, sr.) is not far behind. "Curtice may be the second-best tackle in the Big Eight," Switzer has said. "If he hadn't been playing noseguard most of the year, Curtice would definitely be the No. 1 guy." Evans, of course, is the No. 1 fellow in Switzer's book.

Williams was dynamite against Colorado and Oklahoma State, leaving Switzer with rather repetitive post-game reports: "Our tackles played great."

And the defensive line appears to be getting better. Noseguard Dante Williams (6-2, 265, jr.) is back after breaking a foot in August. Both of the Williams lads (they aren't related) started against Nebraska last year. With these three healthy, running up the middle on Oklahoma will not be easy.

In Sooner lingo, its stand-up players (ends) are considered linemen. On the left side, Wayne Dickson (6-4, 240, jr.) took Cooper's place and has performed admirably. By Sooner standards, he's at least adequate against both the run and

pass. James Goode (6-4, 233, so.) on the right side has been considered since last year to be on the verge of superstardom, but he's not achieved that in 1988 in part because of a cast on his right hand. Still, he's come close.

The key ingredient at defensive end, however, is not who the Sooners have; it's who they don't have. Specifically, they don't have the two monsters who thwarted the Husker perimeter attack in 1987. There is no comparison.

Still, the right side is manned by Evans and Goode, which poses the kind of strategy problems to offensive coaches that Neil Smith and Broderick Thomas did in 1987.

Linebackers: Kert Kaspar (6-3, 238, sr.) and Richard Dillon (6-0, 217, sr.) are fine players. Kaspar in particular is vicious against power teams. Still, Switzer moaned early this year that linebacker speed was missing, and Kaspar reacted defensively, assuming Switzer's comment referred to him. It

did. Strength and savvy are Kaspar's forte.

Dillon, on the other hand, is swift. He missed two-thirds of the season with a bad ankle but appears fit. With Dillon's speed, Oklahoma will cover the sidelines more effectively. In his return against Oklahoma State, Dillon was impressive.

Defensive backs: Despite having almost a full season under its belt, the secondary has shown signs of inexperience. Sophisticated passing attacks and talented skill players have occasionally taken their toll on the Sooner DBs. Blessed with raw talent, this group feasts on conventional offenses.

Ken McMichel (6-1, 208, jr.) has shown signs of being a superior strong safety. Free safety Kevin Thompson (5-11, 191, jr.) makes the big plays, having chased down several foes from behind while also making several key interceptions and pass breakups. Right cornerback Scott Garl (6-1, 214, sr.) is the veteran — a tough, savvy player. The earlier reference to raw talent would have been more emphatic if not for Garl. Still, he's the kind of player almost every college coach loves, and his leadership is invaluable. Jerry Parks (5-9, 176, fr.) at right corner is talented but inexperienced. When opposing quarterbacks have chosen to pick on a cornerback, it's been Parks.

Kicking: Punter Todd Thomsen has blossomed recently. He out-kicked Keith English of Colorado and consistently gave Oklahoma State poor field position. Kicker R.D. Lashar was spectacular in 1987, hitting 10 of 15 field goals, but he's simply not had many attempts this year.

Concerning returns, Oklahoma has only been average. There simply haven't been many long runs for the Sooners, but it's just as important to say Oklahoma hasn't given up *anything* because of its kick coverage.

Overall, the Sooners are good again. Because of youth, it stands to reason they could get even better.

Switzer was asked after his win over Oklahoma State about playing Nebraska for the Big Eight championship. He smiled and said, "It's been that way for 20-something years. It hasn't changed." ■

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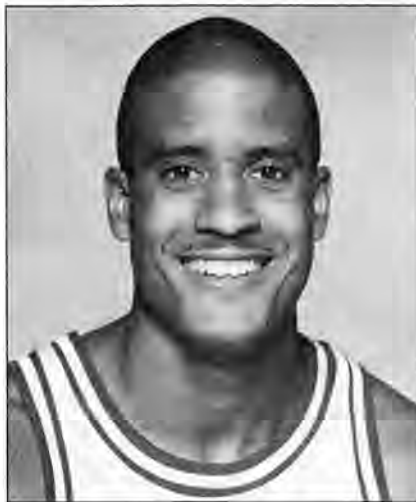


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Mike Babcock

AIR SCALES



Clifford Scales was ecstatic when the Bulls and Michael Jordan came to Lincoln.

Clifford Scales waited outside the Nebraska basketball team's locker room at the Devaney Sports Center, barely able to control his excitement.

The Cornhusker sophomore was a bundle of nerves. As soon as Michael Jordan emerged from the locker room, where he had used Scales' cubicle for an exhibition game between the Chicago Bulls and New Jersey Jets, Scales hoped to have his picture taken with Jordan, the NBA's Most Valuable Player and two-time scoring champion.

Arden Reid, a Nebraska assistant, had agreed to take the photograph with Scales' camera. But Scales had to ask Jordan if he would consent.

That was the deal.

Finally, the door opened, and Jordan emerged. Scales approached his idol.

"I said, 'Mr. Jordan'... no, I didn't say it like that. I acted like I knew him. 'Mike, can I have a picture with you?' That's what I said."

Jordan smiled that million-dollar smile. "If it's quick," he said.

Scales snapped his fingers.

"Is that quick enough?" he asked, looking to see if Reid was ready.

Click went the shutter. Jordan traversed the hallway and was gone.

To say Scales is a Michael Jordan fan is a serious understatement, something on the order of saying Jordan is a "pretty good" basketball player.

Scales, for example, requested and was given jersey No. 23 this season, after wearing No. 11 as a Nebraska freshman.

Rodney Curtis had No. 23 at Nebraska last season, but he has since left the team for personal reasons.

"I was hoping Rodney would come back," says Scales.

But when it was apparent Curtis wouldn't, Scales asked for the number that he wore in high school.

Jordan, of course, wears No. 23.

Scales also carries the nickname "Air," for "Air Jordan," and when the Bulls came to Lincoln in late October, he showed up at the Devaney Sports Center wearing a Chicago Bulls black baseball cap.

Scales spent the entire evening snapping photographs of Jordan.

Whenever Jordan came out of the game, Scales watched him on the bench.

And when Jordan left the game for the final time, early in the fourth quarter after scoring a game-high 20 points, Scales lost all interest in the action.

"I took about 15 pictures of him on the bench. I think I've got more of him there than playing," says Scales.

"I didn't know how to react," Scales says. "When game time came, I was just like a kid in a candy store."

Scales is from Chicago, but he was a Michael Jordan fan long before Jordan was drafted by the Bulls after his junior season at North Carolina.

Scales' devotion to Jordan is ironic, considering he attended St. Joseph High in Westchester, Ill., a Chicago suburb.

If you aren't up on Illinois high school basketball history, one of St. Joseph's most famous alums is Detroit Pistons' guard Isiah Thomas.

"He started it, making a name for the school," says Scales. Since then,

"everybody's been trying to do what Isiah did, be a good player, a good person, a good scholar, but do it in their own way, with their own style."

Scales certainly did it his own way. That's how he ended up at St. Joseph High, playing for Coach Gene Pingatore, in the first place. His home is in Maywood, where most aspiring basketball players choose to attend Proviso East High, another suburban school with a rich athletic tradition.

"In the neighborhood where I grew up, it was a sin not to want to go to Proviso East," says Scales.

Scales, who attended a parochial elementary school, planned to enroll at Proviso East. In fact, his mom made arrangements for him to do so.

But the day he was supposed to complete his enrollment and buy books, Scales changed his mind, sort of.

"I was lazy," he says. "I was supposed to go there (Proviso East) and register in the afternoon." Instead, "I registered and bought my books for St. Joseph in the morning. Afterward, I didn't feel like doing anything, so I went home and took a nap."

One school was as good as another. "I figured, no big deal," Scales says.

He had second thoughts, sitting on the bench on the freshman team.

"I expected to start the first game, and when the coach called the names, mine wasn't there," Scales says.

By season's end, however, his name was in the ninth-grade starting lineup.

Scales started on the sophomore team and was an occasional starter on the varsity his junior year. St. Joseph finished with a 30-1 record and got the fourth-place trophy in the state large schools tournament after the team to which it lost in the semifinals was subsequently penalized by the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) for using an ineligible player.

The next season, St. Joseph finished with a 28-3 record and lost to eventual champion Chicago King, 70-68, in the semifinals of the state tournament.

Scales, team captain, averaged 18.5 points, five rebounds, four assists and 3.5 steals per game as a senior.

Scales was the team's Most Valuable Player. He earned All-State honorable mention and was nominated for the

McDonald's All-American team. Both major wire services voted him on the Class AA All-Tournament Team. And he was the leading scorer in both the Catholic League All-Star Game and the City-Suburban All-Star Game.

Cornhusker freshman Carl Hayes was the sixth man on that team.

"My senior year, everybody who wanted one got a scholarship," says Scales, who attributes that not only to the quality of the St. Joseph players but also to Pingatore, the coach.

"If a guy wanted a scholarship, Coach Ping worked as hard as he could to get him one, contacting college coaches. Coach Ping was more than a coach."

To say Pingatore was dedicated to his players is "an understatement."

Scales made recruiting visits to Colorado State and Loyola-Marymount, as well as Nebraska.

He was impressed by Loyola-Marymount because of Coach Paul Westhead, who preceded Pat Riley as coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, and because of the weather in Southern California.

But Nebraska was equally impressive to Scales, who visited the weekend of a football game with Florida State. "I fell in love with Nebraska," he says.

In addition, "I liked the competition in the Big Eight. The athletes and the teams, top to bottom, are better."

Scales' decision to become a Cornhusker was further influenced by a sense of loyalty. "They contacted me first, as a junior, when I was still up-and-coming. They were there from the beginning," he says. "The other schools jumped on the bandwagon."

Scales played in all 31 games last season (he was the only freshman who did), starting five.

His appearances were more than token. He averaged 19 minutes a game, which exceeded his expectations.

"No way in the world did I think I'd get as much playing time as I did," says Scales. "I thought I'd just be a practice player, helping get the other guys ready, and if we were losing by a lot or winning by a lot, I'd get in."

He averaged 5.5 points, hitting 51.1 percent from the field. His scoring high was 15 points in an 82-62 victory over Columbia University. He scored 12

points in a 92-77 loss to Oklahoma.

Scales played well enough to earn a spot on the Big Eight's All-Freshman Team, along with teammate Rich King.

This season, Scales is competing for the starting guard position alongside senior captain Eric Johnson. And he

draws inspiration, of course from Michael Jordan.

Jordan's autograph, tacked up on the wall at the head of his bed, and the photographs are reminders, too.

Then Scales works harder.

Jordan would expect it. ■

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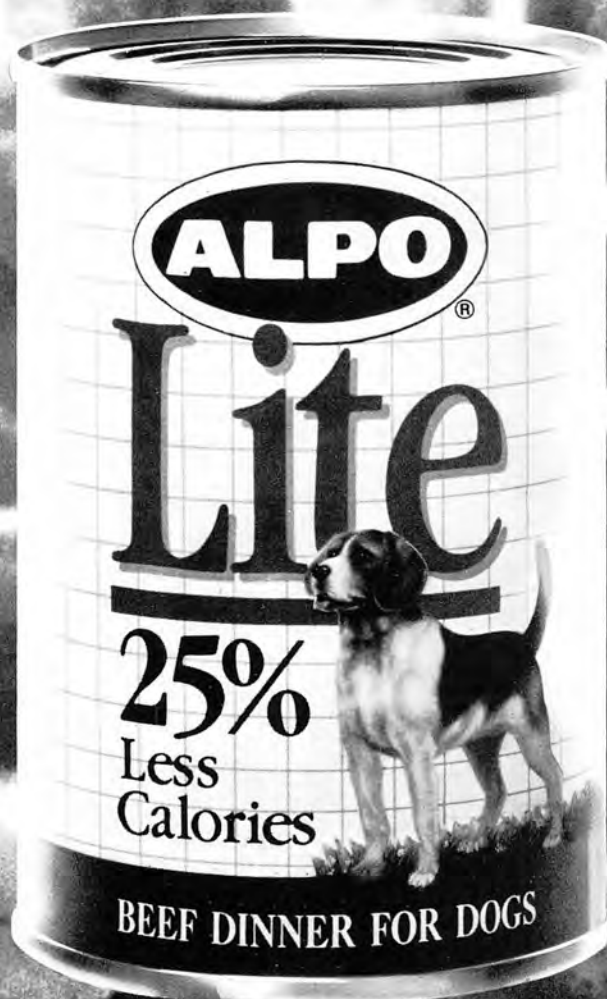
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Mark Owens

A Thing of Beauty

NEBRASKA TRADED BODY BLOWS WITH THE FIRED-UP BUFFS TO STAY ON TRACK FOR A BIG EIGHT SHOWDOWN.

LINCOLN, Neb. — Football, Nebraska-style, was brutal. In this day of sophisticated college offenses and split-personality defenses, Nebraska football ate raw meat. The Cornhuskers burned their dead. It was animalistic. Almost prehistoric. Their eyes saw only one prey. A Buffalo.

Nebraska had to kill or be killed — nothing fancy about that — and this sixth Big Eight game of the 1988 season ended at dusk with a rugged, exhausted, but satisfied, Cornhusker standing over the carcass of a Buffalo.

It was a thing of beauty. Nebraska won, 7-0.

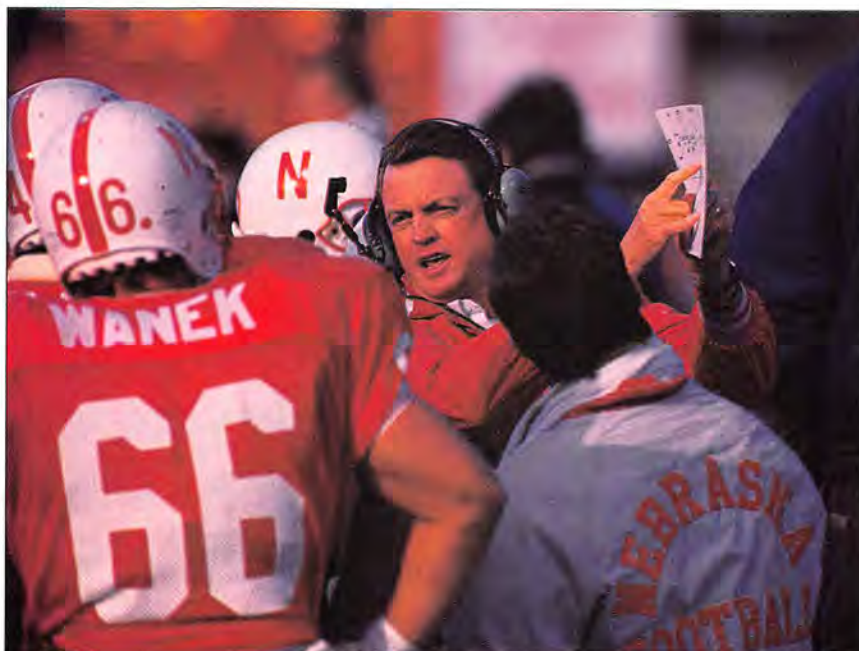
"I was pacing the sidelines," said Steve Taylor, Nebraska's iceman of a quarterback who coolly drove the Huskers 59 yards late in the third quarter just as it appeared NU might face its first shutout since 1973.

"It wasn't pretty," said Taylor. "But we won, and that was the main thing — to make sure to have a shot at the Big Eight title."

All it took was one drive.

Nebraska, now 6-0 in the Big Eight and 10-1 overall, had gone three straight possessions and 15 plays without making a first down, mostly because of a frenzied Buff effort on defense. But with 8:54 left in the third period, the Huskers struck. Taylor opened this drive with a 19-yard keeper, and Nebraska looked like the nation's top offense, which it had been before playing Colorado, which almost beat Oklahoma a month ago.

After a 9-yard completion to tight end Todd Millikan, Taylor turned it over to I-back Ken Clark, and Clark responded. The junior from Omaha gained 28 yards on five carries, the last coming from the 2-yard line and culminating in a wide-open sweep down the right side



It took some halftime adjustments, but the offense finally did the job.

for a touchdown.

Even though the rough-and-tumble Clark would get a game-high 165 yards on 28 carries, that shortie was all that mattered.

The Black Shirts made sure.

In one of their best defensive games of the year, the Huskers repeatedly stopped Colorado when the visitors threatened. CU got to midfield or into Nebraska territory seven times, but its

most productive effort could only produce a 47-yard field goal attempt into a 30-mile-per-hour wind. It drifted wide.

The other six drives ended with four punts and two fumbles.

"The defense played great the whole day," said Tom Osborne. Colorado would finish with 13 first downs, but only four in the second half. The Buffs, averaging 278 rushing yards a game,

were held to 193 and only 62 after intermission.

Black Shirt stars abounded.

Senior safety Mark Blazek came off the bench to lead Nebraska with 10 tackles, along with junior linebacker Chris Caliendo, who is making a late-season charge after starting 1988 rather slowly. Broderick Thomas only improved his

chances of all-star honors with an eight-tackle effort, while linebackers Jeff Mills and LeRoy Etienne registered seven stops apiece.

"They're something else," linebacker coach John Melton said. "After getting adjusted to some things at the half, LeRoy played as well as he can. Caliendo — my gosh, he's coming on. Of

course, Thomas and Mills played well. So did Marco. Then we've got Randall Jobman, and we have to get him in the game more. We're playing pretty good defense right now."

Nebraska's first shutout of 1988 and the first since the sixth game of last season, was highlighted by a handful of go-for-the-throat plays.

In the second quarter, Colorado had reached the Husker 19 thanks mostly to a series of body blows to the NU defensive interior.

Coach Bill McCartney then ordered a flank attack, with wide receiver Jeff Campbell streaking on a reverse after the Black Shirts presumably were preoccupied with stopping the line buck.

Instead, the reverse by Campbell, who stunned NU with a long-distance run in 1986, was met by Thomas. Campbell gave ground to Thomas. Then he juke. When Thomas didn't buy the juke, Campbell retreated and, 19 yards from the line of scrimmage, Campbell surrendered. When the blood had dried on this CU march, the Buffs were on the NU 43 and had to settle for a punt into the wind.

Five plays later and with less than two minutes left in the half, Colorado recovered a Husker fumble, taking over at the NU 39. It looked grim, considering the success of halfback Eric Bieniemy, who had 21 yards in the first quarter and had entered the game as the nation's fourth-leading rusher.

It got grimmer when the Black Shirts were flagged for a personal foul that put Colorado on the Nebraska 24 with a first down.

From there, Bieniemy burst over left guard while pulling along free safety Tim Jackson, outside linebacker Jeff Mills and cornerback Charles Fryar, a little thief as it turned out. With his teammates seemingly in a fix, Fryar had the presence of mind to do some pulling of his own. Certainly, the 5-foot-6, 190-pound Buff halfback had guts, but Fryar had the ball. It was first-and-10, Nebraska, at the Husker 12 and the Black Shirts had pulled off another big play.

Blazek spent most of the day thwarting third-down and fourth-down conversions. Lawrence Pete regrouped after a



The Black Shirts had their best game of the year.

SCORING SUMMARY

Nebraska 7, Colorado 0

Colorado.....	0	0	0	0	—	0
Nebraska.....	0	0	7	0	—	7

Neb — Clark 2 run (Barrios kick).

Attendance: 76,359

first-half alley fight with CU center Erik Norgard, to make critical tackles. Mills made several stops at or behind the line, and Thomas was a pass rushing terror.

One of Nebraska's most surprising weapons came in the form of John Kroeker. The senior from Henderson, Neb., punted eight times against the Buffaloes for an average of 44.4 yards per kick. His performance against Colorado raised his season punting average to 42.1 yards per punt, as Kroeker outkicked CU's heralded Keith English, the nation's top-ranked punter prior to his 41.0 average on seven punts against the Huskers.

What didn't show up in the statistics was Kroeker's continuous placement of the ball deep within Colorado territory. His ability to send the Buffs farther and farther from the end zone enabled the Husker offense to have enough time to work out its kinks and establish the traditional ground game.

Take, for example, Kroeker's sixth punt of the game. Standing at the Nebraska 14, Kroeker unloaded a 46-yard punt that sent Buff return specialist Jo Jo Collins retreating to the Colorado 13. It pinned the Buffs at their own 20.

Three plays later, Colorado's Keith English punted the ball to the Nebraska 41. The next series of plays saw Clark scoot in from the 2 and the Huskers take the lead for good at 7-0. The next time that Kroeker was called upon, he responded with a career-high 65-yarder that sent the stadium into cheers.

"If it wasn't for that nasty UCLA game, I'd be right up there," Kroeker proudly said of his late-season improvement. Kroeker punted well at UCLA, averaging over 40 yards per kick, but the Huskers were hurt badly on punt returns, including a 75-yard return for a touchdown. On Saturday, only four of Kroeker's punts were returned for a total of 35 yards.

Even with success on defense and special teams, Nebraska's victory was raw at times. Halfback J.J. Flannigan gave the Black Shirts a stunning gift when he fumbled in the open field after racing 24 yards to the Husker 19. Several yards ahead of any pursuer, Flannigan coughed it up untouched — his touchdown becoming the victim of



Broderick Thomas let his play do the talking in the Black Shirts' first shutout of the season.

an apparent suicide as he tried to move the ball from one arm to the other. Colorado recovered, but Thomas quickly followed with his 19-yard sack, and the drive ended.

At other times, the Buffs self-destructed before gaining a single yard.

In the first period, having driven to the Nebraska 48, CU quarterback Sal Aunese fumbled the snap twice in short-yardage situations, forcing a punt.

In the fourth quarter, Aunese fumbled the snap on fourth-and-1 from the NU 27 to stop the last legitimate Buff drive of the game.

But the Black Shirts would have been impressive without the gifts.

"It was our best defensive game of the year," said Charlie McBride, NU defensive coordinator. "We made some adjustments at the half, and it helped."

After intermission, Colorado could only generate 105 yards in total offense, and 70 of that came on a single drive — an ill-fated march that fizzled early in the final period. And most of that drive came on one play — Aunese's 43-yard pass to tight end John Perak.

This was the same Buff offense that mauled Missouri with 45 points. It was the same Buff offense that came within a missed 62-yard field goal of tying Oklahoma. Certainly, it was critical that Bieniemy missed almost half the game because of hamstring problems, but Flannigan ran for 153 yards as the backup.

And Colorado's defensive effort shouldn't have come as a total surprise; Coach McCartney had been cracking the whip.

Concerned in the last year that his tough-guy discipline was hurting team morale, McCartney eased up this fall with a nice-guy approach. The Buff defense quickly adopted a nice-guy mentality when it came to welcoming foes into their end zone. After five games, Colorado was giving up over 22 points a game.

At that point, McCartney felt his club had now gotten soft, so he reverted to his old, tough ways, and Colorado has given up an average of only 10 points per game since.

No matter how it was done, the key

Photo by John Bills

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Security Mutual Life has been sharing the winning tradition of Nebraska for 93 years and you can count on us to continue that tradition.

Clark Shines Against CU

On this cold and blustery Saturday, sunshine was a welcome sight to cold Husker faithful. But shining almost as brightly as the November sun and warming Nebraska fans in a greater way was I-back Ken Clark's performance.

In the same way that the sun broke through clouds bit by bit in the first

half, Clark broke through a Colorado defense that had clouded the oddsmaker's predictions of a Husker romp. At the end of the first half, Clark had gained 57 yards on 12 carries to be the bright spot for a Nebraska offense that totaled only 98 yards in the first 30 minutes.


However, as the sun finally burned through the dark, winter clouds to bask Memorial Stadium in its light, Clark was able to gain 50 yards on 11 carries and one touchdown in the crucial third quarter that allowed Nebraska to nudge ahead of the Buffs.

Clark finished with 165 yards rushing on 28 carries and the game's lone touchdown on a 2-yard scamper. It was the fifth 100-yard game for Clark this year as he previously had 122 against Arizona State, 154 versus Iowa State, 225 against Kansas State and his career-high 256 yards in the Oklahoma State offensive shootout.

His five 100-yard performances vaulted him into a tie with Monte Anthony and Jeff Smith on the all-time, 100-yard rushing performance chart at Nebraska.

Clark's 165-yard rushing day against CU pushed him past Keith Jones (1987) and I.M. Hipp (1977) and into fourth place on the Nebraska single-season rushing chart. He has now gained 1,330 yards for 1988. If he's able to get 13 yards next week against Oklahoma, Clark will shoot past Bobby Reynolds (1950) into third place.

Challenging Clark for Player of the Game honors was senior punter John Kroeker, who repeatedly pinned CU deep in its own territory. He punted eight times for an average of 44.4 yards per kick, and his 65-yarder in the fourth quarter was a career high. In this defensive struggle, Kroeker was a crucial Black Shirt ally. ■



Ken Clark got his yards the hard way.

Photo by John Bills

Saturday was simply winning.

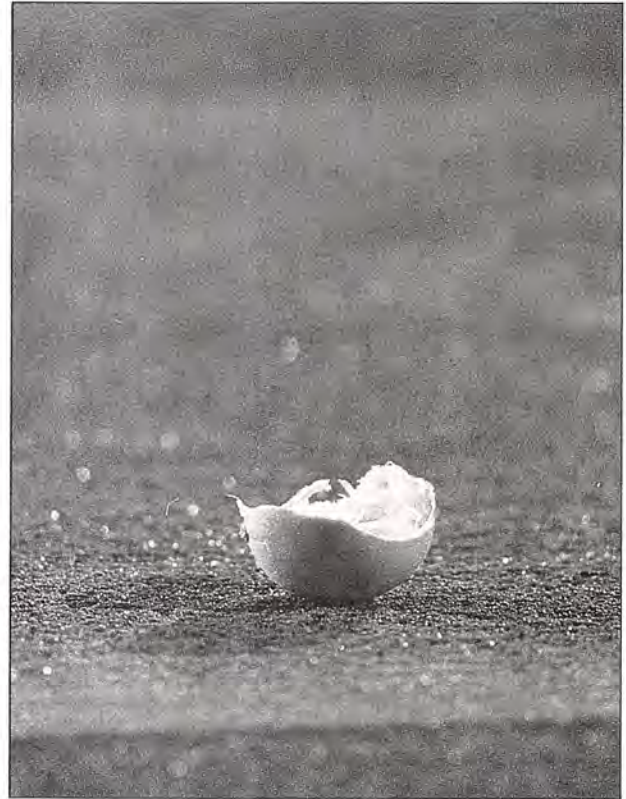
Sure, said Taylor, "the seniors told the younger guys about the Oklahoma game. We told them it would be for the Big Eight championship *if* we beat Colorado. It was a matter of first things first. For us to win the Big Eight, we had to win, and that's what was on our minds. It didn't matter to us how many points we were favored by. It didn't matter that we had a big game the next week. The big game was today, and we got the job done."

Colorado almost got the job done. The fired-up Buff defense held Nebraska to 16 total first downs, 278 yards rushing and only 18 passing as both quarterbacks suffered from the windy conditions. Taylor, who had been hitting well over 50 percent of his passes this year, connected on only two of nine attempts for 18 yards. Aunese passed 11 times but his only completion came midway through the final period.

Still, Taylor continued his near-flawless passing when it came to turnovers. Without an interception against the Buffs, Taylor has now gone four games without being picked off. In the last eight games, the senior from San Diego has thrown two interceptions in 91 attempts. However, Taylor's five-game streak of throwing at least one TD pass did come to a halt.

All told, Colorado took some liberties with the Black Shirts in the first half, and the Husker offense struggled

The Orange Bowl is within reach.



at times. But in a game of high stakes and talent-on-talent, Nebraska got the job done.

Afterwards, the victory celebration was confidently quiet. Questions about the Sooners were tactfully handled or courteously passed over. Etienne had to be fair to himself and admitted after the game he was already sky-high for Ok-

lahoma; that it would be a struggle all week to keep his emotions from exploding all over the Midwestern countryside.

But Etienne chose not to pick a score. "No predictions?" he was asked.

Etienne clinched his fists, took a deep breath, smiled and said, "You've got that straight."

A brutally truthful answer. ■

SEASON RECAP	8/27 A&M	9/3 USU	9/10 UCLA	9/24 ASU	10/1 UNLV	10/8 KU	10/15 OSU	10/22 KSU	10/29 MU	11/5 ISU	11/12 CU	11/9 OU	BOWL	SEASON AVERAGE
First Downs	19	34	21	29	26	38	28	32	9	29	16			26
Yards Rushing	201	421	260	441	444	547	570	479	116	566	278			393
Yards Passing	125	169	125	29	56	118	92	143	153	71	18			100
Fumbles - Lost	5-3	0-0	2-1	2-0	1-0	1-0	0-0	1-1	7-3	3-1	3-2			2-1
Time of Possession	60%	54%	44%	57%	59%	54%	53%	65%	48%	53%	51%			54%
Third Down Conversions	50%	50%	46%	45%	56%	40%	58%	63%	15%	69%	17%			46%
Final Score	23-14	63-14	28-41	47-16	48-6	63-10	63-42	48-3	26-18	51-16	7-0			42-16

NOTES & QUOTES

By running for 40 yards and passing for 18 more, Steve Taylor moved past Mike Rozier into third place on Nebraska's career total-offense chart. Taylor now has 4,825 yards and is only 188 yards short of former quarterback Dave Humm in second place. The all-time leader at Nebraska is Jerry Tagge, who amassed 5,283 yards from 1969-71.

Saturday's win was the lowest-scoring game for Nebraska since 1981 when the Huskers nipped Missouri, 6-0, in Columbia. It was the lowest-scoring Colorado game since a scoreless tie in the 1965 opener at Boulder. Saturday's game also marked CU's first shutout loss since a 28-0 defeat by Oklahoma in 1986, and the Buffs' first shutout loss to any team other than Oklahoma since 1981, when they lost 27-0 to Kansas.

With a final home crowd of 76,359 fans, the Huskers set a single-season attendance record. For six games in 1988, Nebraska has averaged 76,341 in attendance, which is a fraction better than the

mark set in 1974, two years after expansion of Memorial Stadium.

It also marked the 12th straight game of 76,000 or more in attendance. Capacity at Memorial Stadium is 73,650.

Naturally, the Huskers' NCAA consecutive sellout streak continues, reaching 161 games.

In reference to Nebraska's good fortune on J.J. Flannagan's open-field fumble, defensive coordinator Charlie McBride said frankly, "Today, God must have been a Husker fan."

At two hours and 33 minutes, the NU-CU game was the shortest of the 1988 season. On Sept. 13, Utah State's game (2:51) was the only other game to be completed in less than three hours.

The Husker injury report did not seem to be too serious, but there was at least one unusual casualty. Linebacker Mark Hagge suffered a lacerated chin when his helmet came off as he ran downfield on punt coverage. Turf toe afflicted three Huskers: fullback Bryan

Carpenter, split end Nate Turner and cornerback Charles Fryar. Each is expected to be available for the Oklahoma game. Other injuries were to I-back Ken Clark (ankle bruise), center Jake Young (bruised elbow and hand), offensive left guard Andy Keeler (bruised elbow) and linebacker Jeff Mills (knee strain). Barring complications during practice, each should be ready for the trip to Norman.

On Nov. 26, Danny Nee's third Cornhusker basketball team will open its regular season against Creighton in the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The rest of the 1988-89 NU basketball schedule is as follows: Nov. 30 vs. Michigan State; Dec. 2-3 in the Ameritas Classic in Lincoln; Dec. 5 at Idaho; Dec. 11 at Texas Tech; Dec. 14 at Ohio State; Dec. 17 vs. Furman; Dec. 23 vs. Drake; Dec. 28 at Chaminade; Dec. 29 at Morehead State; Dec. 30 at Louisiana State; Jan. 3 vs. Sam Houston State; Jan. 7 vs. Oklahoma; Jan. 9 at Wisconsin-Green Bay;



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Jan. 12 vs. Northern Illinois; Jan. 14 at Oklahoma State; Jan. 17 vs. Maryland-Baltimore; Jan. 21 vs. Kansas State; Jan. 23 vs. Wyoming; Jan. 28 vs. Missouri; Jan. 31 at Iowa State; Feb. 4 vs. Kansas; Feb. 8 at Colorado; Feb. 11 at Kansas State; Feb. 14 vs. Oklahoma State; Feb. 19 at Missouri; Feb. 22 vs. Colorado; Feb. 26 vs. Iowa State; Mar. 1 at Kansas; Mar. 4 at Oklahoma; Mar. 10-12 at the Big Eight Tournament.

If the Citrus Bowl does, in fact, take the loser of Oklahoma-Nebraska next week, the Huskers stand a chance of missing a "major" bowl for the first time since 1980, when 9-2 Nebraska went to the Sun Bowl in El Paso, where Tom Osborne's squad beat Mississippi State, 31-17.

At 10-1, Nebraska has now won 10 or more football games 15 times in 99 years of collegiate grid action. Current Husker boss, Tom Osborne, has posted 10-win seasons nine times in his 16 years at Nebraska.

Bob Devaney did it four times and Walter Booth turned the trick in 1902-03.

Colorado was ranked No. 19 in both the AP and UPI polls prior to playing Nebraska, and that was the first Top-20 appearance for the Buffs since Oct. 31, 1978. It also marked the first time since Sep. 23, 1985 that the Big Eight had four teams in the Top 20 in the UPI poll. The last time it happened in the AP poll was Oct. 13, 1980.

Through 11 games this year, Broderick Thomas leads the Nebraska defense in nine individual statistical categories as he finishes out a brilliant Husker career. Nebraska's list of All-Americans who have played defensive end or outside linebacker includes Willie Harper (1971-72), Jimmy Williams (1981), Bob Martin (1975), Derrie Nelson (1981), George Andrews (1976) and Thomas. With eight total tackles against the Buffaloes, Thomas now has 89 stops for the season, which is the most ever

recorded in a single year by an end/outside linebacker at Nebraska.

In fact, the Houston senior's 1987 campaign was the previous best (73), nipping Harper's 1971 All-American effort in which he had 72 total tackles.

Colorado entered its game against Nebraska with a six-game road winning streak, which was the longest in the Big Eight Conference.

Nebraska's passing game dipped against Colorado as the 18-yard total was the lowest of '88 for the Huskers.

Reminder: This is your last weekly issue. The next magazine you'll receive, the January issue, will be published December 15. That issue will include a complete recap of the Oklahoma game, final statistics and preview of the bowl.

On the cover: Tom Osborne and Barry Switzer, the two winningest active coaches in college football, contemplate their 1985 clash in Norman, the site of this year's renewal of the Big Red rivalry. ■



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STATISTICS

RUSHING

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Clark	20-80-1-4.0	12-90-1-7.5	12-46-0-3.8	22-122-1-5.5	14-79-3-5.6	10-64-0-6.4	27-256-3-9.5	20-225-1-11.3	23-57-0-2.5	20-146-1	28-165-1-5.9		208-1,330-12-6.4
Taylor	18-34-0-1.9	9-74-2-8.2	14-95-1-6.8	17-116-1-6.8	11-67-0-6.1	8-43-2-5.4	11-140-3-12.7	11-34-0-3.1	13-(38)-0-(2.9)	12-154-3	12-40-0-3.3		136-759-12-5.6
Knox		5-50-0-10.0	3-8-0-2.7	4-26-0-6.5	8-57-0-7.1	6-120-1-20.0	10-53-0-5.3	19-108-4-5.7	2-4-1-2.0	10-44-0	3-18-0-6.0		70-486-6-6.9
Carpenter	3-4-0-1.3	4-30-0-7.5	5-47-0-9.4	7-28-0-3.7	5-59-1-11.8	2-33-1-16.5	7-76-0-10.8	6-18-0-3.0	12-96-1-8.0	6-40-0	10-44-0-4.4		67-473-3-7.1
Rodgers	10-65-0-6.5	7-19-1-2.7	2-12-0-6.0	13-113-1-8.7	11-50-1-4.5								43-259-3-6.0
Joseph		3-34-1-11.3		2-15-1-7.5	1-22-0-22.0	12-77-1-6.4		2-23-0-11.5		4-44-0			24-2-12-3-8.9
Flowers		3-18-0-6.0		2-14-0-7.0	3-37-0-12.3	13-80-1-6.1		8-41-0-5.1		3-12-1			32-202-2-6.3
Gdowski		6-40-1-6.7		1-(2)-0-(2.0)	1-19-0-19.0	5-42-0-8.4				4-56-1			17-155-2-9.1
Lewis		4-15-0-3.8	1-9-0-9.0	2-1-0-0.5	3-16-0-5.3	10-50-1-5.0	2-5-0-2.5	3-18-0-6.0		4-18-0			29-132-1-4.5
Bell	1-(5)-0-(5.0)				1-(4)-0-(4.0)	4-33-0-8.3	1-38-0-38.0			4-40-0	2-11-0-5.5		13-113-0-8.7

(Legend: Attempts-Yards-TDs-Average)

PASSING

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Taylor	22-11-0-125-1	10-7-0-143-1	29-14-3-125-2	10-3-1-29-1	10-6-0-56-0	9-7-0-78-1	11-6-1-92-2	11-6-0-129-1	9-3-0-153-1	9-5-0-71-1	9-2-0-18-0		139-70-5-1,019-11
Gdowski		3-2-0-19-1				3-2-0-31-0		1-1-0-14-0		1-0-0-0-0			15-299-7
Joseph		1-1-0-7-0				2-1-1-9-0		1-0-1-0-0					4-2-2-16-0

(Legend: Attempts-Completions-Interceptions-Yards-TDs)

RECEIVING

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Millikan	2-33-1	1-8-0	2-9-1			3-57-1	3-52-2	2-52-0	1-82-1	1-6-1	1-9-0		16-308-7
Gregory	4-44-0	1-13-0	5-57-1	3-29-1	2-21-0	1-11-0	2-32-0		1-12-0	1-20-0			20-239-2
Turner	2-23-0		1-5-0		1-7-0	1-9-0		1-19-0	1-59-0	1-28-0			8-1-50-0
Brinson	1-8-0	1-34-0	3-15-0		3-28-0		1-8-0	2-55-1					11-148-1
Bell	1-9-0	3-77-1	1-17-0			2-26-0							7-129-1

(Legend: Catches-Yards-Tds)

TACKLES — LINEMEN

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Pete		2-0-2; 1-8	5-0-5; 0-0	3-2-5; 1-12	2-1-3; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	3-2-5; 0-0		7-3-10; 2-11	0-3-3; 0-0	8-0-8-1-2		31-13-44; 4-31
Griffin	3-1-4; 0-0	2-1-3; 1-1	3-2-5; 0-0	4-1-5; 1-1	3-1-4; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	5-1-6; 2-11	1-0-1; 0-0	4-2-6; 2-12	0-1-1; 0-0	3-0-3-0-0		29-11-40; 6-25
Wells	0-1-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-4	1-1-2; 0-0	0-3-3; 1-4	3-2-5; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-8	5-2-7; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	3-2-5-0-0		15-18-33; 3-16
Brungardt	1-1-2; 1-7	1-1-2; 0-0	6-0-6; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0		1-1-2; 1-1				1-2-3; 1-4			11-6-17; 3-12
Murray	3-1-4; 1-1	2-2-4; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0				0-1-1; 0-0			5-6-11; 1-1
Sims				0-2-2; 0-0	1-0-1; 1-8	0-1-1; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0		1-2-3; 1-3			2-6-8; 2-11
Monarrez		0-1-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	0-2-2; 0-0				0-1-1; 0-0			1-5-6; 0-0

(Legend: Unassisted tackles-Assisted tackles-Total Tackles; Tackles for loss-Yards lost)

TACKLES — LINEBACKERS

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Thomas	6-8-14; 1-1	5-2-7; 3-23	8-3-11; 1-4	5-5-10; 1-2	3-1-4; 1-14	2-6-8; 1-2	4-4-8; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-7	4-5-9; 1-9	5-2-7; 2-12	4-4-8-1-19		47-42-89; 13-93
Etienne	6-5-11; 1-1	3-1-4; 0-0	8-1-9; 0-0	5-2-7; 0-0		3-3-6; 0-0	6-2-8; 1-4	1-3-4; 1-5	3-3-6; 1-4	3-5-8; 1-1	6-1-7-0-0		44-26-70; 5-15
Caliendo		1-0-1; 0-0		1-1-2; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	4-1-5; 0-0	3-5-8; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	9-2-11; 1-1	0-5-5; 0-0	5-5-10; 0-0		30-19-49; 1-1
Mills	4-2-6; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-5	2-1-3; 1-2	1-1-2; 0-0	3-4-7; 1-4	2-1-3; 0-0	3-2-5; 0-0	2-3-5; 0-0	1-3-4; 1-2			19-19-38; 4-13
Tyrance	2-2-4; 0-0	4-1-5; 0-0	6-2-8; 0-0	0-3-3; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0	0-2-2; 1-4	2-2-4; 0-0	3-1-4; 0-0		0-2-2; 0-0			19-15-34; 1-4
Jobman	3-0-3; 0-0	2-1-3; 0-0	3-1-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-3-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0		3-1-4; 0-0			16-13-29; 0-0
Marco	1-2-3; 0-0		3-2-5; 0-0	2-0-2; 1-1	1-2-3; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-0-1; 1-8	2-1-3; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0			13-11-24; 2-9
Croel	2-0-2; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-6		3-0-3; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	2-3-5; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-7			14-8-22; 2-13
Hagge		1-1-2; 0-0		4-0-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-2		0-2-2; 0-0			10-5-15; 1-2

(Legend: Unassisted tackles-Assisted tackles-Total tackles; Tackles for loss-Yards lost)

TACKLES — BACKS

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Cooper	4-4-8; 0-0	5-2-7; 1-0	4-2-6; 0-0	3-2-5; 1-0	3-2-5; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0	6-4-10; 0-0	3-1-4; 1-1	4-0-4; 0-1	0-1-1; 0-0	0-2-2; 0-0		34-20-54; 3-2
Blazek	0-5-5; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-1	4-2-6; 0-1	4-2-6; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	0-0-0; 1-0	1-1-2; 0-1	2-2-4; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0	8-2-10; 1-0		21-17-38; 2-3
Fryar	3-5-8; 0-1	2-0-2; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	1-0-1; 1-0			4-0-4; 1-1	1-0-1; 0-0	9-0-9; 0-0	0-0-0; 1-1	2-1-3; 1-0		26-6-32; 4-3
Jackson	1-1-2; 1-1	1-1-2; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-0	3-1-4; 0-2		2-0-2; 0-0	5-1-6; 0-1	2-0-2; 1-0	4-0-4; 0-1	1-0-1; 0-0	2-0-2; 1-0		23-7-30; 4-5
Hicks	2-1-3; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	3-0-3; 1-0		4-1-5; 1-0				4-1-5; 0-0		18-3-21; 2-0
Lewis		2-0-2; 2-0	2-1-3; 1-0	2-2-4; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-1	0-1-1; 0-1	2-1-3; 0-0					10-8-18; 4-1
Sanders	1-0-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0	1-3-4; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	2-3-5; 0-1		0-1-1; 1-0			8-8-16; 1-1
Pickens	1-0-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-0		1-1-2; 0-0		2-2-4; 0-0		3-0-3; 0-1		2-0-2; 0-0			10-4-14; 1-1
Custard		1-0-1; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0			1-0-0; 0-0				2-0-2; 0-0			6-0-6; 0-0

(Legend: Unassisted tackles-Assisted tackles-Total tackles; Pass breakups-Interceptions)

TEAM STATISTICS

	GAME		SEASON			GAME		SEASON	
	NU	CU	NU	OPP		NU	CU	NU	OPP
First downs	16	13	279	166	Total plays	64	62	835	687
First downs rushing	15	10	218	77	Net yards	296	236	5421	3016
First downs passing	0	1	43	67	Average gain per play	4.6	3.8	6.5	4.4
First downs penalty	1	2	14	22	Fumbles lost	3-2	6-1	24-11	25-9
Rushing attempts	55	51	684	414	Penalties - yards	7-65	3-30	78-666	64-510
Yards gained rushing	303	222	4571	1772	Interceptions - yards	1-5	0	16-328	7-58
Yards lost rushing	25	29	248	335	Punts	8	7	37	71
Net yards rushing	278	193	4323	1437	Punt average	44.4	41	42	39.4
Passing attempts	9	11	151	273	Kickoff returns - yards	2-68	1-21	40-819	58-880
Passes completed	2	1	77	120	Punt returns - yards	1-10	4-35	38-455	20-178
Passes intercepted	0	0	7	17	Possession time	30:27	29:33	31:14	27:02
Net yards passing	18	43	1099	1579	3rd down conversions	2-12	4-15	66-137	38-169

BIG EIGHT CONFERENCE STANDINGS THROUGH GAMES OF NOVEMBER 12

Team	CONFERENCE GAMES						ALL GAMES					
	Win	Loss	Tie	Pct.	PF	PA	Win	Loss	Tie	Pct.	PF	PA
Nebraska	6	0		1.000	250	89	10	1		.909	467	180
Oklahoma	6	0		1.000	232	94	9	1		.900	323	140
Oklahoma State	4	2		.667	268	187	7	2		.778	427	257
Colorado	3	3		.500	125	94	7	3		.700	249	162
Iowa State	3	3		.500	112	134	5	5		.500	167	209
Missouri	1	5		.167	109	178	2	7	1	.200	190	313
Kansas	1	5		.167	101	264	1	9		.100	172	395
Kansas State	0	6		.000	104	261	0	10		.000	157	392

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Mike Babcock

Huskers Have Their Own Magic

It's happened more than once in the "Peanuts" comic strip. Charlie Brown attempts to place-kick a football held by Lucy, who pulls it away a split second before foot meets ball.

That image of a startled Charlie Brown flying head-over-heels has been used as a metaphor of the frustration Nebraska has often felt playing Oklahoma.

The Cornhuskers have had victories snatched from their grasp when it appeared they were bound to win, none more dramatically than in 1986.

Oklahoma scored 10 points in the final 1:22 of that game, including Tim Lashar's 31-yard field goal with six seconds remaining, to win 20-17.

In 1980, the Sooners won 21-17 when Buster Rhymes followed a long run on third down with a 1-yard touchdown run with only 56 seconds remaining.

And in 1976, the Cornhuskers lost to Oklahoma 20-17, after the Sooners used two razzle-dazzle passes, their only completions of the game, to set up a

touchdown with 38 seconds left.

Those three games, all played in Lincoln, help explain where the concept of "Sooner magic" comes from.

After Oklahoma's similarly miraculous, 31-28 victory over Oklahoma State earlier this season in Stillwater, some of the Sooners started talking about that magic once again.

"Their offensive line was making some comment about that," said Doug Glaser, Nebraska's junior offensive tackle.

"We try not to think about it."

The subject of Sooner magic came up again after the Cornhuskers defeated Colorado 7-0 to set up their annual battle with Oklahoma in Norman.

Nebraska safety Tim Jackson was familiar with the same post-Oklahoma State game comments to which Glaser referred. "They were talking about Sooner magic," he said.

"The magic comes from wins. You can give a lot of explanations for wins. People are going to use different labels.

It's just a term."

Jackson, who was playing at Coffeyville (Kan.) Community College when Oklahoma used its magic against Nebraska in 1986, wanted to make a point. This season, the Sooners will need more than magic to win.

Magic is illusion, and this Cornhusker audience isn't willing to suspend its disbelief, according to Jackson.

In fact, Nebraska may have something more potent than Sooner magic. Jackson calls it "that old need factor, the offense and defense coming through at the right time. When it's time to do something, someone comes through."

A fumble by Colorado's Eric Bienie-my recovered by Jackson at Nebraska's 12-yard line late in the first half illustrates the concept.

"I took the ball. I just reached in and took it," said Jackson. "He had the ball tucked pretty good.

"But I went in and got it."

That and an open-field fumble by the Buffaloes' J.J. Flannigan on the previous series — Husker magic? — helped Nebraska's Black Shirt defense post its first shutout of the season, another example of the need factor.

"We had to have it," Jackson said.

"They got a shutout when we needed it," said quarterback Steve Taylor.

If the Black Shirts hadn't gotten the shutout, though, the need factor might have come into play in another way.

"We probably could've scored more points if we needed to," Taylor said.

Whatever it took to win.

The psychology of the game is usually more important than the relative strengths and weaknesses of the teams when Nebraska plays Oklahoma.

Two of the Cornhuskers' best teams, in 1982 and 1983, were pushed to the limit by less-talented Oklahoma teams.

The Sooners' 1978 team, one of Coach Barry Switzer's best, lost to Nebraska 17-14 during the regular season before gaining a measure of revenge in an unusual Orange Bowl rematch.

This season, in particular, the teams appear to be evenly matched.

Oklahoma doesn't have a decided ad-



Buster Rhymes scored a TD with 56 seconds left to give OU the edge, 21-17, in 1980. Was it "Sooner Magic?"

vantage in speed, and its wishbone hasn't been quite as devastating. But the Sooners, like the Cornhuskers, have done what they've had to do to win.

"I don't think this is a typical Nebraska team, always blowing people out," said Glaser. "Other Nebraska teams have started off real quick. But this one seems not to, offensively."

With the notable exception of the Oklahoma State game, in which the Cornhuskers scored 35 points in the first quarter, Nebraska hasn't been a particularly fast-starting team.

But "we play well in the fourth quarter. That's what it's going to take to beat Oklahoma," said Glaser.

Playing well in the fourth quarter and playing with intensity from the first quarter on, according to strongside linebacker LeRoy Etienne.

Again, the psychology of the Nebraska-Oklahoma game matters most.

"The Cornhuskers wouldn't have 'any problem beating Oklahoma if we could play the same game we played this week,'" Etienne said.

"No prediction. I think we're pretty confident we can beat Oklahoma. We just have to play with intensity, play good, sound football and execute well."

If Jackson can be believed, Nebraska shouldn't be psyched out by the Sooners this time around, mainly because the Cornhuskers haven't spent all season worrying about Oklahoma.

Going into the season, most Nebraska fans regarded games with Texas A&M in the Kickoff Classic and UCLA in Los Angeles as the biggest concerns before Saturday's showdown in Norman.

Victories over Oklahoma State and Colorado have become expected.

But not by the players themselves.

"This team doesn't look ahead," Jackson said. "We take care of the present, then look to the future."

After the Cornhuskers' 41-28 loss to UCLA, for example, "I was thinking about Arizona State (Nebraska's next opponent), and that was it," he said.

"I made sure I worked extra hard for the Arizona State game. It was the most prominent thing in my mind."

Oklahoma, which lost to USC two weeks later, was the farthest thing from Jackson's mind. "I knew, in time, this

game would come up," he said.

"Like no wine before its time. That's the way it is with this game. And that's the way it should be."

If Oklahoma is looking for a psychological edge this season, the Sooners may have to look elsewhere.

Sooner magic? "There's no psychological problem," according to outside linebacker Broderick Thomas.

Rather than giving them an edge, the

Sooners' last two victories over Nebraska "might make us hungrier," said Thomas, who shares a philosophy with former Boston Celtics center and NBA Hall of Famer Bill Russell:

It's better to be good than lucky.

"We're not looking for breaks," the senior All-American candidate said.

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HUSKERS PREVIEWED

Predictions

Too Close To Pick

Pat Haden, CBS-TV: "This game will feature two, very interesting and contrasting coaches. There are only a handful of coaches in college football who can dominate a game from the sideline, and Barry Switzer is one of them."

"Tom Osborne is an outstanding coach whom I respect a lot. Some people seem to wonder, 'When is Tom Osborne going to win his national championship?' But I don't think that way. I believe he's taken the right attitude. Take the Orange Bowl against Miami as an example. Coach Osborne could have settled for kicking the extra point and the tie, and I'm sure Nebraska would have gotten the national championship in at least one poll. But a football game needs resolution, and I'll always respect his decision to go for the

win.

"Realistically, there's not much chance of the OU-Nebraska winner getting the national title. There are simply too many teams in front of them. It could happen if everything falls into place. A winner? Oklahoma and Nebraska are so close this year, I don't think the answer will be clear until perhaps the last few days when final injury reports are out. It's always been a great, close series, and this may be the closest game in quite a while."

John Fricke, CNN Sports: "It is going to be very interesting to see what happens now that this game is down in Norman, primarily because of the fact the last two were in Lincoln. It will also be interesting to see how the teams go into it on an emotional level. The

Huskers were allowed to talk last year, but I don't expect them to come out talking at all this year.

"It will be interesting to see what the Sooners do in getting the emotional edge, especially considering the fact they are not as good as they have been in the past couple of years. It's like cryptonite when Nebraska sees that OU helmet. Oklahoma has to jump on Nebraska early, contrary to popular belief about what Oklahoma's done to Nebraska in the last quarter. This year Nebraska matches up with Oklahoma and this a very veteran Nebraska team. It has a veteran leader in Steve Taylor and I don't think they're going to be psyched out when they go to Norman.

"The fact that both teams have lost relaxes them going into this game. The

James E. Sherwood

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game will be determined by whether or not Nebraska can stop Oklahoma with some consistency. The Husker defense has had a lot of problems along the front line and I think Oklahoma is going to be able to run between tackles. Mike Gaddis could have a career day if Nebraska can't stop him. On the other side of the ball, Nebraska is going to be able to move it because I haven't seen a lot from Oklahoma that would lead me to believe Nebraska's offensive line shouldn't be able to move Oklahoma off the ball. Player for player, this seems to be a dead-even game. This is a one- or maybe a two-touchdown game either way. Nebraska has trouble in the first quarter and will have to get over that or Oklahoma may jump on them early."

Sally Jenkins, *Washington Post*, Washington, D.C.: "Most people probably think this is Nebraska's year to do it. I happen to suspect Oklahoma has a superiority complex going for it and I don't think it's going to be as much to Nebraska's advantage as people might say. I think the Sooners suspect that if they can get to the Orange Bowl against Miami, they're still in a national championship race. I also think Nebraska's defense looks a little soft this year. **I think the result will be a touchdown difference.**"

Dick Janda, KOLN-TV, Lincoln, Neb.: "Since this game is being played in Norman, it is obvious that the Sooners will have a definite advantage with the crowd behind them. These two rivals are very evenly matched this year. If Nebraska has a key in winning this game, it would be that they not make any turnovers and they have to cut down on their mistakes. The Husker offense is going to approach this game just like any other. They'll use their running game to set up their game. Nebraska won't rely on just the run or just the pass. To be honest, this game is just too close to pick a winner."

Dave Armstrong, KRMG-AM, Tulsa, Okla.: "I look for a relatively low-scoring game. Both teams have strong defenses this year and that's such a surprise because at the beginning of the year, both teams were touting their offenses and downplaying their defenses. Nebraska has done well against the rush, with the exception of

Barry Sanders. I think we're going to find as we usually do, in this kind of a clash, a really good defensive battle.

"I pick OU to win it, I don't think they have the better team, but they have tradition on their side and until Nebraska proves to me that they can beat the Sooners with this bunch of kids, I've got to stick with the Sooners, and I'll say **21-17, Oklahoma.**"

Russ Batenhorst, KHAS-TV, Hast-

ings, Neb.: "Oklahoma and Nebraska are down this year. Neither one is as dominating this year as they have been in the past.

"Nebraska has to stop Charles Thompson.

"I'm trying to decide to go with my heart or my head in predicting the outcome. **I think OU will win**, but the Huskers have a better chance this year than they have in recent years." ■

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Oklahoma Sooners

The following are season averages of 11 Husker games and 10 Sooner games through Nov. 12, 1988.

OFFENSE

First Downs

Nebraska 26 Oklahoma 20

Yards Rushing

Nebraska 393 Oklahoma 368

Yards Passing

Nebraska 100 Oklahoma 70

Total Yards

Nebraska 493 Oklahoma 438

Scoring

Nebraska 42 Oklahoma 32

Possession Time

Nebraska 54% Oklahoma 52%

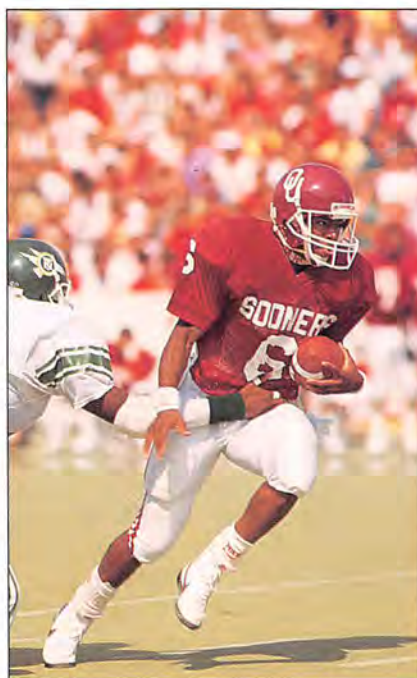
Third Down Conversions

Nebraska 46% Oklahoma 44%

DEFENSE

First Downs

Nebraska 15 Oklahoma 17



Charles Thompson

Yards Rushing Allowed

Nebraska 131 Oklahoma 123

Yards Passing Allowed

Nebraska 144 Oklahoma 195

Total Yards Allowed

Nebraska 275 Oklahoma 318

Points Allowed

Nebraska 16 Oklahoma 14

Opponent Possession Time

Nebraska 46% Oklahoma 48%

Third Down Conversions Allowed

Nebraska 27% Oklahoma 28%

OTHER

Punting Average

Nebraska 42 Oklahoma 41

Punt Return Average

Nebraska 12 Oklahoma 6

Kickoff Return Average

Nebraska 20 Oklahoma 16

Total Turnovers

By Nebraska 18 By Oklahoma 25

KEYS TO VICTORY

For Nebraska...

- ★ Pass early and often
- ★ Establish Clark inside
- ★ Bootleg and draw with Taylor
- ★ Contain Evans
- ★ Stop OU's fullback
- ★ Cooper and Jackson must excel
- ★ Bend but don't break
- ★ String out the pitch play

For Oklahoma...

- ★ The fullback must excel
- ★ OU must not fumble
- ★ Block the linebackers
- ★ Preoccupy the safeties
- ★ Slow NU's inside game
- ★ Make Taylor pitch
- ★ Stop Millikan inside the 20
- ★ Watch for trickery

Nebraska vs. Oklahoma

The Game: Saturday, Nov. 19, 2:30 p.m. at Memorial Stadium in Norman, Okla., broadcast nationally by CBS-TV.

Nebraska (10-1)

23	Texas A&M	14
63	Utah State	14
28	UCLA	41
47	Arizona State	16
48	UNLV	6
63	Kansas	10
63	Oklahoma State	42
48	Kansas State	3
26	Missouri	18
51	Iowa State	16
7	Colorado	0

Oklahoma (9-1)

28	North Carolina	0
28	Arizona	10
7	Southern Cal	23
35	Iowa State	7
28	Texas	13
70	Kansas State	24
17	Colorado	14
63	Kansas	14
31	Oklahoma State	28
16	Missouri	7

COACH'S EVALUATION

Tom Osborne

Hard to Figure

"I thought the defense really played well against Colorado. We gave up some yards, but we stiffened when they got to about the 30 or 35.

"The wind was a factor, especially in the first half. It was hard to throw because of the crossing winds. I thought we had receivers in good shape a couple of times, but the ball was blown off course a little.

"John Kroeker had a great day. Our special-teams play as a whole was excellent. Steve Taylor's fumble just as he was about to score hurt. He was just trying to get in the end zone and didn't get the ball put away.

"That would have been a tremendous play for us because it would've put the game pretty close to being out of reach. With six or seven minutes to go and a 14-0 lead, we would've been in pretty good shape.

"Penalties hurt. They kind of took us out of field position.

"But give Colorado credit. They played hard and played excellent defense, just like we figured they would. Colorado always seems to play us tough.

"Frankly, I thought we'd move it better. Our team this year is hard to figure. One game we'll just move the ball almost at will, and the next game we'll have a lot of trouble. It was that way against Missouri, then we did an excellent job against Iowa State in pretty poor weather, and now we let some things get away from us against Colorado. Mostly, that has to do with the people you play.

"I don't think we played badly today, but I don't think we were necessarily at the emotional pitch that Colorado may have been. I thought both teams played excellent defense.

"Neither team seemed to have much in the way of field position. The wind was part of that. So was the defense and penalties. It was just a tough day for anyone to move the ball.

"Colorado tackled well on defense, and we did a pretty good job in the second half. It seemed like we overran some things in the first half.

"Ken Clark ran the ball well, and he

really seemed to keep his balance and break a lot of tackles, especially in the second half.

"Because it was so close, we felt there was no doubt about going for it on those fourth-down situations.

"I'm looking forward to this week. I'm sure it will be a great ball game with

Oklahoma. I'm not so sure we were at as high an intensity level as we've been before this season. But I expect that will take care of itself this week. I don't think the players were looking past Colorado. It was more a matter of Colorado playing well on defense.

"It's been a while since we've played down in Norman, and the Big Eight championship is still on the line, so I expect this will be a pretty intense week of preparation for the players." ■

SOONER 2-DEEP

OFFENSE

TE	43 Adrian Cooper	6-6	250	so.
	86 Billy Dykes	6-3	247	fr.
LT	64 Terron Manning	6-2	292	so.
	72 Tre' Giller	6-5	278	so.
LG	54 Mike Sawatzky	6-2	264	so.
	67 Nigel Clay	6-4	274	so.
C	65 Mike Wise	6-6	270	jr.
	90 Randy Wallace	6-4	256	fr.
RG	68 Anthony Phillips	6-3	286	sr.
	63 Mark Blodgett	6-3	270	so.
RT	76 Mark VanKeirsbilck	6-2	270	jr.
	55 Jerry Crafts	6-7	332	fr.
SE	36 Eric Bross	6-2	194	jr.
	18 Artie Goess	5-11	190	so.
QB	6 Charles Thompson	5-10	175	so.
	4 Jamelle Holieway	5-9	186	sr.
LH	25 Anthony Stafford	5-7	184	sr.
	1 Eric Mitchel	6-1	205	sr.
RH	7 Rod Fisher	6-1	185	fr.
	32 Mike Gaddis	6-2	205	fr.
FB	27 Damon Stell	6-0	195	sr.
	2 Leon Perry	6-1	223	jr.
PK	28 Rotnei Anderson	6-1	212	sr.
	13 R.D. Lashar	5-11	185	so.

DEFENSE

LE	34 Wayne Dickson	6-4	240	jr.
	97 Proctor Land	6-5	240	fr.
LT	85 Tom Backes	6-5	276	so.
	77 Stacey Dillard	6-7	275	fr.
NG	99 Tony Woods	6-5	265	sr.
	98 Dante Williams	6-2	265	jr.
RT	78 Scott Evans	6-3	251	so.
	93 Curtice Williams	6-3	280	sr.
RE	39 James Goode	6-4	233	so.
	47 Tracy Gordon	6-3	234	jr.
WLB	46 Kert Kaspar	6-3	238	sr.
	30 Chris Wilson	6-3	227	fr.
SLB	35 Frank Blevins	6-4	228	so.
	30 Chris Wilson	6-3	227	fr.
LC	8 Jerry Parks	5-9	176	fr.
	15 Charles Franks	6-0	175	fr.
FS	22 Kevin Thompson	5-11	199	jr.
	48 Greg DeQuasie	5-11	194	fr.
SS	12 Ken McMichel	6-1	208	jr.
	21 Lance Swanson	6-2	200	fr.
RC	49 Scott Garl	6-1	214	sr.
	3 Ted Long	5-11	187	fr.
P	91 Todd Thomsen	6-1	195	sr.

CORNHUSKER 2-DEEP

OFFENSE

SE	19 Morgan Gregory	6-0	185	jr.
	22 Nate Turner	6-1	220	fr.
LT	62 Bob Sledge	6-2	270	sr.
	78 Tom Punt	6-8	270	so.
LG	65 Andy Keeler	6-3	265	sr.
	66 Jim Wanek	6-0	240	so.
C	68 Jake Young	6-5	260	jr.
	59 Jeff Anderson	6-4	270	sr.
RG	76 John Nelson	6-1	260	sr.
	69 Bill Bobbora	6-3	260	jr.
RT	70 Doug Glaser	6-7	295	jr.
	73 Steve Engstrom	6-3	285	so.
TE	43 Todd Millikan	6-3	245	sr.
	85 Monte Kratzenstein	6-4	225	jr.
QB	9 Steve Taylor	6-0	205	sr.
	14 Gerry Gdowski	6-1	195	jr.
FB	29 Bryan Carpenter	5-10	200	jr.
	18 Lance Lewis	6-0	200	fr.
IB	32 Ken Clark	5-9	200	jr.
	34 Tyreese Knox	5-10	215	sr.
WB	33 Dana Brinson	5-9	170	sr.
	21 Richard Bell	6-0	195	jr.
PK	16 Chris Drennan	5-9	180	jr.
	44 Gregg Barrios	5-8	180	so.

DEFENSE

OLB	89 Broderick Thomas	6-3	235	sr.
	93 Jon Marco	6-1	220	sr.
LT	84 Willie Griffin	6-3	275	sr.
	56 Joe Sims	6-4	285	so.
MG	96 Lawrence Pete	6-1	270	sr.
	74 Mike Murray	5-10	240	jr.
RT	91 Kent Wells	6-5	285	jr.
	95 Paul Brungardt	6-7	255	so.
OLB	42 Jeff Mills	6-3	220	jr.
	88 Mike Croel	6-3	215	so.
SLB	47 LeRoy Etienne	6-1	230	sr.
	55 Randall Jobman	6-3	230	jr.
WLB	49 Chris Caliendo	6-3	240	jr.
	40 Pat Tyrance	6-2	230	so.
LCB	8 Lorenzo Hicks	6-0	195	sr.
	38 Bruce Pickens	5-11	185	jr.
RCB	10 Charles Fryar	5-10	175	sr.
	5 Tahaun Lewis	5-11	170	so.
SS	17 Reggie Cooper	6-3	200	so.
	23 Mark Blazek	6-2	200	sr.
S	4 Tim Jackson	6-0	190	sr.
	23 Mark Blazek	6-2	200	sr.
P	46 John Kroeker	5-11	175	sr.
	48 Scott Beckler	6-0	185	so.

Coaches Beyond Compare



In 1973 Tom Osborne and Barry Switzer were named head coaches at Nebraska and Oklahoma, and college football has been under seige ever since. Switzer, with a record of 157-27-4 (84.6 percent), and Osborne, who owns a mark of 157-35-2 (81.3 percent), rank as college football's two winningest active coaches.

Their success would be even more astounding if it weren't for each other.

Just eliminate Oklahoma from Nebraska's schedule and Osborne's record would be 151-23-2 (86.3 percent), placing him behind Notre Dame legends Knute Rockne (88.1 percent) and Frank Leahy (86.4 percent) as the third winningest coach of all time.

If Switzer had never coached against Nebraska, his winning percentage would be 85.2 percent, again third on the all-time list. As it is now, Switzer is fourth on the all-time list, only hundredths of a percentage point behind George W. Woodruff.

In their first 15 full seasons, Switzer and Osborne are unchallenged when it comes to Top 10 finishes. The Osborne-coached Huskers have been in the AP or UPI Top 10 every year. Switzer and the Sooners have been there 12 times. Their closest competition comes from Bo Schembechler of Michigan and Joe

Paterno of Penn State, both with 10 finishes among the nation's elite in the last 15 seasons.

Osborne and Switzer have gone to more major bowls (Rose, Cotton, Sugar, Orange and Fiesta) than any coach in the last 15 years. Osborne has 12 major-bowl trips to his credit, and Switzer owns 11. Again, Paterno (with 10) and Schembechler (with nine) are the nearest rivals.

When it comes to individual player honors, these two coaches run away from the pack. Both have coached Heisman Trophy winners — Osborne with Mike Rozier and Switzer with Billy Sims. Both have seen two of their players win Lombardi Awards — Switzer with Lee Roy Selmon and Tony Casillas and Osborne with Dave Remington and Dean Steinkuhler. Osborne has coached three Outland Award winners in Remington, the only player to ever capture the honor twice, and Steinkuhler, who received it the following year.

Switzer's Outland winners include Selmon and Greg Roberts. In the cases of Steinkuhler and Roberts, both won the Outland while blocking for Rozier and Sims respectively, during their Heisman years. Also under Switzer, linebacker Brian Bosworth won the first two Dick Butkus Awards as the nation's



top linebacker, and last year OU safety Rickey Dixon was the co-recipient of the Jim Thorpe Award for the nation's top defensive back.

The list of All-Americans who've played under these two coaches reads like a "Who's Who" in college football. Both have coached 32 each.

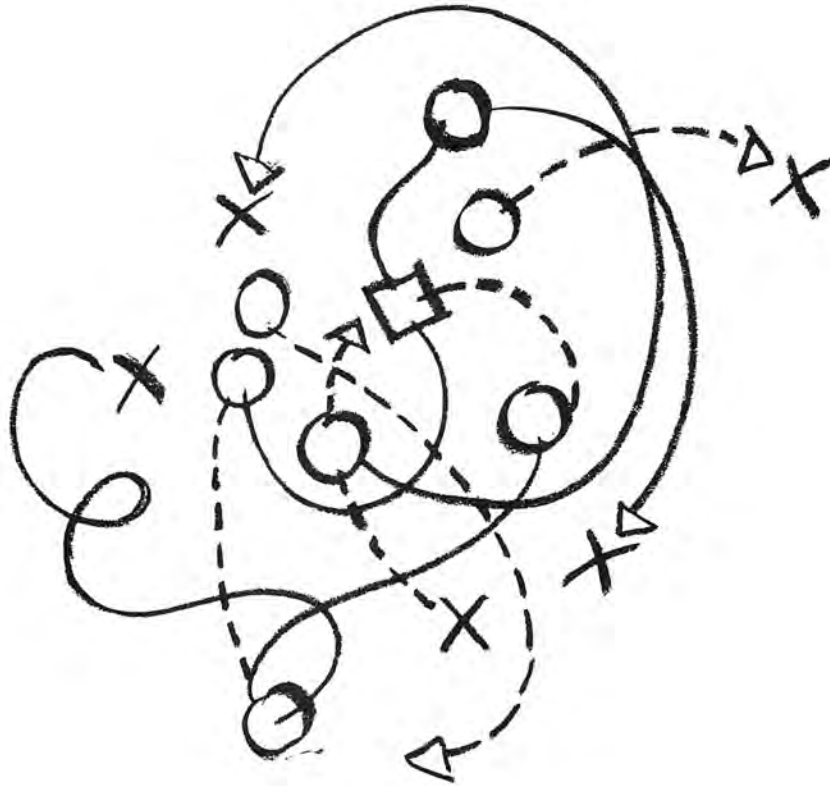
If one thing can be said about these two men, it is that their careers have been influenced by some of the great coaches in the game. Switzer, who played at Arkansas in the late '50s under Frank Broyles, began his coaching career under his mentor a few years later. More than eight of Broyles' former players at Arkansas are now head coaches in college today. Osborne was the hand-picked successor of the legendary Bob Devaney who led Nebraska back to national prominence in the early '60s. Devaney's confidence in Osborne has helped make Nebraska one of the most dominant powers in all of college athletics. It could safely be said that Broyles and Devaney are partly responsible for the two Big Reds being in the place they are today.

Behind every great team is a great coach and without question, Nebraska and Oklahoma are two great teams. Tom Osborne and Barry Switzer will always see to that. ■

Winningest Active Coaches

1. B. Switzer, Okla., 157-27-4 (.850)
2. T. Osborne, Neb., 157-35-2 (.814)
3. J. Paterno, PSU, 212-53-2 (.798)
4. B. Schembechler, Mich., 222-63-8 (.771)
5. L. Edwards, BYU, 154-51-1 (.750)
6. D. Ford, Clem., 84-27-4 (.748)
7. T. Donohue, UCLA, 107-37-7 (.732)
8. P. Dye, Auburn, 124-45-3 (.730)
9. B. Bowden, FSU, 183-70-3 (.721)
10. V. Dooley, Ga., 199-77-10 (.713)
11. D. Sheridan, NC St., 87-36-4 (.704)
12. H. Deromedi, C. Mich., 80-34-4 (.695)
13. J. Johnson, Miami, 77-34-3 (.688)
14. J. Sherrill, Tex. A&M, 103-44-12 (.686)
15. D. James, Wash., 137-68-3 (.666)

Legend: rank, coach, school, record, winning percentage.



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Quarterback Grab Bag

THE RACE TO REPLACE STEVE TAYLOR
IN 1989 WILL BE WIDE OPEN.

Each Friday before Nebraska football games, the Cornhusker quarterbacks take tests monitored by Coach Tom Osborne.

The tests always include at least four sheets, according to Gerry Gdowski, who's been taking them for two years.

Naturally, it's getting easier.

One page of the exams lists the audibles for that week's opponent. "We're supposed to write down what plays we're going to check out of in certain

situations and what play we're going to go to instead," says Gdowski, a 6-foot-1, 195-pound junior and the No. 1 backup to senior Steve Taylor.

"There's a sheet of pass plays, where we have to write down what every receiver's route is and what order we're supposed to read the receivers. There's a sheet of formations, and we have to write down each play we can run out of each of the formations. And then there's a sheet of down and distance, where we

have to write what plays we like to run in certain situations. For instance, third-and-long, second-and-short, stuff like that."

Osborne evaluates the exams and later that night, after the team has attended a movie and then met for approximately an hour, he and the quarterbacks spend "five or 10 minutes" going over the tests, "to see if we're having any problems," Gdowski says.

Playing quarterback at Nebraska isn't easy. You probably suspected that.

Gdowski did when he arrived in Lincoln from Fremont High School, where he was a first-team Super-State defensive back and the *Sunday Journal-Star* Boys Prep Athlete of the Year as a senior.

The multi-sport athlete was the Super-State quarterback and he won four all-class gold medals at the state track and field meet his junior year.

But even he was a little surprised at the complexity of the Cornhuskers' offense, that and the speed at which things happen at the college level.

"Everything is so much quicker," Gdowski says. "It went up a notch from high school to freshman ball and then it went up a couple more notches from freshman ball to the varsity.

"In high school, you might play against a team with three or four guys who are fast and quick and come at you. Here, everybody's that way."

That's why Nebraska doesn't recruit quarterbacks who can't run.

And that's also the reason that what Cornhusker quarterbacks are required to do has to become second nature before they can step in and contribute.

The audible system, for example. After starting at quarterback for the freshman-junior varsity in 1986, "I thought I was more comfortable with the



Mickey Joseph (2) has been a solid No. 3 on the QB depth chart.

audibles than I was. There's a lot you have to learn here. And the audibles are a large part of it," says Gdowski.

Something as seemingly simple as taking the center snap and pitching the ball to the I-back takes a considerable amount of time and effort.

"There are a lot of things involved in just doing something basic like that," Gdowski says. "Starting with the snap; taking the right steps — footwork's a part of it when you're younger — knowing who you have to option off of, and then going to him; optioning off him (the defender) in the proper manner; pitching the ball right, getting it out in front of the running back... there's a lot to learn."

And Gdowski has learned much of it, which is why he'll begin practice this spring a step ahead of everyone else in the competition to succeed Taylor as Nebraska's No. 1 quarterback.

Because of Gdowski and a group of young quarterbacks, which includes Mickey Joseph, Mike Grant, Keithen McCant, Tom Haase and Jerry Dunlap, Cornhusker fans can rest assured there will be life after the multi-talented Taylor.

Gdowski, who will be the only senior, isn't looking ahead.

"I'm trying to concentrate on what's happening now," he says.

"But I've thought about it a little, and I'm sure everyone's going to feel like the job will be up for grabs."

Because Gdowski is the most experienced of the group and has spent most of this season at No. 2, let's begin with him.

As a freshman, he directed the junior varsity to a 4-1 record, rushing for a team-high 269 yards and completing 16 of 49 passes (32.7 percent) for 306 yards and three touchdowns.

He played well in the spring of his freshman year and finished it third on the depth chart, in part because both McCathorn Clayton and Wendell Wooten, scholarship players, decided to move from quarterback to the secondary.

Given that circumstance, Gdowski avoided a redshirt season.

"When I first came here, I just kind of had that (a redshirt) in my plans," he says. "I figured I would."

"But when McCathorn and Wendell

both changed positions, they needed a third quarterback. And I thought I would get to travel to all the games and get a little playing time, so I decided that would be best for me. I could get on with everything that much sooner."

Gdowski, an excellent student, is on schedule to complete a degree in accounting in four years.

"I still could have redshirted if I had wanted to," says Gdowski.

Instead, he got some on-the-job training as a backup to Taylor and senior Clete Blakeman. He played in six games, rushing for 131 yards and two touchdowns on only 18 carries.

It was valuable experience. Gdowski

"Right now, what I do... is know the play that's been called, look at the defense, and try to see things through Steve's eyes, think if I would do what he did," Gdowski says. "I feel confident I could get the job done."

doesn't regret not redshirting.

"I learned a lot last season," he says. "I was probably more comfortable going into spring ball last year than I was at the beginning of the season."

He learned enough to enter fall camp No. 2 on the depth chart behind Taylor, a position he's since solidified.

Joseph, a redshirt freshman from Marrero, La., has remained No. 3, for the most part, although he and Gdowski took turns being first off the bench to replace Taylor early in the season.

One week, Gdowski was the first in after the Cornhuskers took control of a game. The next week, it was Joseph's turn to be the first one in.

And even though each of the backups was supposed to take a pre-determined number of snaps, "we kind of got each other off to the side and said if we were

driving toward the goal, at the 10- or 15-yard line, we'd let the other guy finish it out," says Gdowski.

Joseph made his collegiate debut early in the fourth quarter of Nebraska's 63-13 victory over Utah State.

On his first play from scrimmage, Joseph kept on a "load option" and gained 17 yards, sliding through the Aggies' weary defense, as slick as you please. His first series lasted barely a minute, in fact, and involved only five plays, including his 17-yard run, his 7-yard pass to wingback Jamie Worden, and his 8-yard touchdown run.

The touchdown also was on an option, underscoring Joseph's background.

He was a *Parade Magazine* All-American at Archbishop Shaw High School in suburban New Orleans, regarded as the nation's best option quarterback.

Nebraska won a recruiting battle with Oklahoma for Joseph's signature on a letter-of-intent. Sooner recruiting coordinator Scott Hill called Joseph, who's listed at 5-10 and 170 pounds, "the best wishbone and option quarterback in America."

Archbishop Shaw High ran a split-backs offense. Joseph's teams were 19-1 over his two seasons as a starter.

"His forte is scrambling, running the option, and thinking at the call of the play and as the play develops," Hank Tierney, his high school coach, said when Joseph signed with Nebraska.

That was obvious from the beginning.

Joseph's confidence also was immediately apparent.

But it didn't get in the way of his deciding to redshirt last fall.

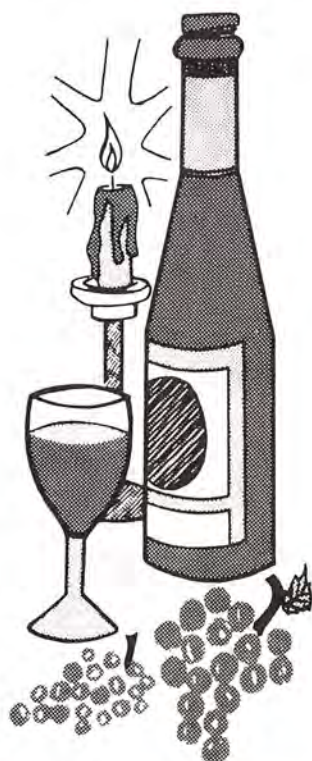
When that decision was announced early on, Osborne explained: "He just feels like with all there is to learn in football and getting adjusted to school, he'd be better off to redshirt. He did it (decided) after going through a pretty confused week, with an awful lot of offense thrown at him."

Sound familiar? Gdowski could appreciate those remarks. It takes time to become a quarterback at Nebraska.

Joseph had to learn some patience last spring. "Sometimes, my tempo's too quick," he said after the first full-scale, game-conditions scrimmage.

"I don't give my pass routes enough

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Quarterback Grab Bag

time to really develop. That's something I have to learn."

The competition between Joseph and Gdowski for the No. 2 job behind Taylor quickly became a topic of conversation during spring practice.

It carried over into fall camp, and naturally, it figures to continue this spring and next fall, except that the No. 1 job will be on the line.

Even so, Gdowski and Joseph have become friends, willing to help each other become the best they can be.

"We get along real well and have lots of fun, all the quarterbacks," the irrepressible Joseph says.

The quarterbacks regularly get on each other, good-naturedly, in practice.

"We double-team on Steve," says Joseph. "He tries to get on everybody, too. Steve says we have funny throwing motions. He says Gerry pushes the ball. He says I have a slingshot (motion). And he says Dunlap sidearms it."

"We all tell Steve, 'You've got to get up on your toes more.'"

"Steve just laughs."

The quarterbacks take practice seriously. "There's a time to be serious in meetings, when you're learning stuff," Gdowski says.

"But as much time as we put into it, it's important to have a few light moments every once in a while."

Despite a season of experience as the varsity's No. 3 quarterback, Gdowski hasn't stopped learning and improving. He's been able to refine his skills.

"Right now, what I do, especially during games, is know the play that's been called, look at the defense, and try to see things through Steve's eyes, think if I would do what he did," Gdowski says. "I feel confident I could get the job done."

Joseph has learned a lot from watching and studying Taylor, too.

"Steve's leadership rubs off on you, how he reacts under pressure. He never looks like pressure's bothering him. He always looks calm," says Joseph.

"That's the way I try to be on the field, just talk normal, don't scream and yell. When a mistake happens, it happens. I think I get that (attitude) from watching Steve."

Naturally, Gdowski and Joseph have watched Taylor more than they'd like.



True freshman Mike Grant could be in the QB fray next spring.

Nebraska hasn't had many blowouts this season, which means Osborne hasn't been able to go to his bench quite as often as he has in the past.

"I know Coach had hoped to play us more. But that's just part of the deal," says Gdowski, who's comfortable enough with the offense that if he's needed, "I think I'm ready."

Taylor's individual success has also been a factor in the amount of playing time he and Gdowski have gotten, according to Joseph.

That's how it should be.

"Steve's in the running for a lot of awards, even though we don't talk about it," Joseph says. "I think Coach owes that to Steve to keep him in there a little longer, to let him play well."

Although you'd expect either Gdowski or Joseph to be the starting quarterback

when Nebraska opens the 1989 season against Northern Illinois in Lincoln, you never know what might happen.

Grant, a freshman from Brandon, Fla., seems to have exceeded the coaches' expectations in directing the high-scoring junior varsity team.

At 6-2 and 205 pounds, he's probably the biggest of the quarterbacks.

Grant ran a wishbone offense in high school and has a strong passing arm. Early on, some freshman receivers had difficulty holding on to his passes.

Whether or not Grant redshirts will probably depend a great deal on how he performs during spring drills.

But he's definitely in the picture, according to Osborne, as are McCant and Haase, who are redshirting this fall, and Dunlap, a redshirt sophomore walkon from Ventura, Calif.

McCant, a scholarship recruit from Grand Prairie, Tex., and Haase, a highly regarded walkon from Aurora, Neb., shared the JV quarterback duties as freshmen last season.

Haase, like Gdowski, a former *Sunday Journal-Star* Boys Prep Athlete of the Year, had the better statistics, completing 29 of 60 passes for 388 yards and four touchdowns and rushing for 100 yards and two touchdowns.

McCant rushed for 92 yards and completed 10 of 28 passes for 182 yards and two touchdowns.

Osborne has emphasized both will be given an opportunity to prove themselves in the spring.

None of the quarterbacks has a knowledge of the Cornhusker offense comparable to Gdowski's, though.

That's because he's been involved in the program longer than the others.

He's more certain of the audibles and "probably a little more in command of the passing game," Osborne says.

Joseph, on the other hand, "is probably a little more apt to make a big play running with the ball. He's a little more elusive. They're different types of quarterbacks," says Osborne.

One thing they have in common, though, with all of the quarterbacks, is a need to do well on those Friday tests.

Gdowski smiles at the thought.

After nearly two full seasons of taking them, "I can get done a lot quicker now," he says. ■



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NEBRASKA'S JUNIOR VARSITY TEAM CLUBBED WALDORF FOR ITS FIRST PERFECT RECORD SINCE THE CLASS OF '85.

Finally, Mike Grant smiled and said he was pleased.

Not overjoyed, but pleased, as were all his teammates on the Nebraska freshman football team this season.

Grant turned in what was a typical performance as he led the Cornhuskers to a 42-27 victory over Waldorf Junior College (Iowa) recently at Memorial Stadium.

The victory gave the junior Huskers

their first 5-0 season since 1983 and helped erase the memory of last year for Coach Shane Thorell.

The NU freshmen posted a 2-3 record, their first losing season ever, in 1987.

But then again, the NU freshmen didn't have Mike Grant at quarterback.

The scholarship freshman from Brandon, Fla., was responsible for touchdown runs of 14 and 8 yards and

touchdown passes of 34, 9 and 32 yards.

"I finally stopped trying to force things and started taking what they gave me and that was the run," Grant said. "I was pretty pleased with my performance today.

"Now, on to the battle for quarterback next spring," he said.

For the season, Grant helped the Nebraska freshmen set team records for rushing yards in a season with 1,798 yards and for points scored in a season with 267.

With 102 yards rushing against Waldorf JC, Grant moved to within 87 yards of the freshman total offense record of 979 yards set by (then) freshman Turner Gill in 1980. Grant also finished one touchdown short of the season record of eight set by Will Curtis in 1981.

Grant claimed there was a special motivation to this year's team.

"When we first started the season, people said that losing the redshirts took away from our program," he said. Top scholarship recruits William Washington, Travis Hill, Tyrone Hughes, Dave Jensen and David White were among those who were designated as redshirt freshmen and did not participate in the NU freshman program this year. Also missing were fullback Lance Lewis, who has been with the varsity all season, Victor Stachmus, who was sidelined by leukemia and Ernie Beler and Kevin Ramaekers, who were academic casualties, but will return to the program next year.

"It hurt a lot of guys when we heard that," Grant said. "That got us motivated right then."

Grant showed plenty of motivation against Waldorf.



Noseguard Matt Hilman dominated Waldorf and led JV linemen in total tackles this year.

Grant was intercepted on Nebraska's first drive and an incompletion stalled the second drive.

But Grant found the answer on the third possession when he handed off to I-back Scott Baldwin four times for 25 yards on an 11-play, 76-yard drive that he finished with a 14-yard run to put the Cornhuskers ahead 7-0 with 1:44 left in the first quarter.

After Waldorf tied the game early in the second quarter, Baldwin picked up 22 yards on a burst around the left end. Grant ran the final 8 yards of a 61-yard scoring drive to pad the lead to 14-7 early in the second quarter.

Five minutes later, Grant hit Brad Hays, a walkon from Elkhorn, on a 34-yard touchdown pass to make it 21-7.

Then, like clockwork, Grant sparked another drive that fullback Andre McDuffy finished with a 16-yard touchdown run with 2:43 left in the half. A little more than two minutes later, Grant found Kolin Haecker, a walkon from Odell, on a 10-yard touchdown pass to give NU a 35-7 halftime lead.

"Grant was spectacular, the way he improvised and scrambled today and all season," Thorell said. "He has to be the best arm I've seen in freshman football here. I can't compare him with Dave Humm and some of the others, but if there ever was a guy who fits the offense here, as far as running and throwing, Grant is it."

Waldorf, which beat Nebraska 42-35 last year, managed to score three touchdowns in the final six minutes, but it was only after Grant hit his favorite receiver Jon Bostick, on a 32-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter to give Nebraska a 42-7 lead.

"The difference for Nebraska was they won the battle of the lines and the addition of that quarterback (Grant)," Waldorf coach Dave Bolstorff said. "They pushed us around in the line and we couldn't handle the front and we couldn't do anything inside with our wishbone."

He cited the play of Nebraska's defensive interior of Jamie Liewer, Matt Hilman and Jeremiah Clark.

"They cut off everything inside. They are very strong and very good," he said.

Liewer, a scholarship freshman from Atkinson West Holt, said the NU

defense was inspired.

"UNO kind of surprised us with how tough they were two weeks ago," he said. "We wanted to prove something here in our last game and we were pumped up for it."

"We had slants and fires, shooting gaps and they all seemed to work," Liewer said. Liewer had seven tackles, while Hilman had nine and Clark three.

Linebacker Paul Wightman had one tackle for a loss and safety Darin Duin had four tackles.

"It was important to the coaches and to us to finish this season 5-0 and to show we had gotten better with all the new things we put in on defense," Liewer said.

Thorell said the defensive performance was important because Waldorf

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Defensive tackle Jamie Liewer sparked in a game that wasn't as close as the score indicated.

quarterback Pat Jackson had embarrassed the Cornhuskers last year.

"He made us look silly last year, and we emphasized how important it was to wrap him up," Thorell said. Jackson finished with 282 yards of total offense, but not until he gained 248 in the second half and 161 in the final six minutes of the game.

"We had to beat the gap in the middle to keep their wishbone under wraps," Thorell said. "Because we saw what Jackson could do when he had the room to run."

Thorell said the play of defensive standouts Mike Petko at linebacker, Tyrone Legette at cornerback, Steve Carmer at safety and the three interior linemen showed good natural instincts. "Things you can't coach and only things you can know when you get into football make them special," he said.

Thorell said the difference in the offense this year was the number of offensive weapons he had to work with.

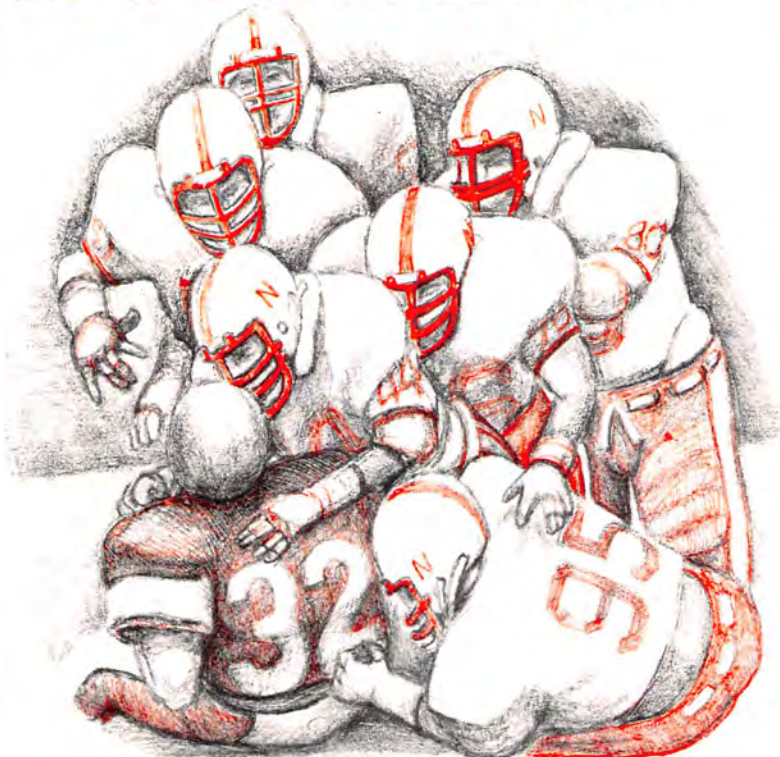
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"It helps when you have more in your arsenal for all the big plays and all the improvising the offense needs to do," Thorell said.

As for Grant, Thorell said he should have a good shot at the competition for quarterback next spring. "He can do so much with his running and throwing. It'll be fun to see what he can do," Thorell said.

He also said that tight end John Parrilla, receiver Bostick and at least 10 others will get a good look at varsity next spring.

"This was a satisfying season because we ended up playing as good as a team as we had all season. It wasn't just offense and it wasn't just defense," he said.

Grant said he was looking forward to the future. "I'm not going to rush it, but I'm looking forward to it. I'm ready to get in there and battle for it. I'm not just out there to play around. I want to start," he said. ■

Shane Thorell's 1988 team was never held below 30 points.



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To Nebraska and Oklahoma fans around the country, the meeting of these two schools each year evokes a nod, smile and raised eyebrow — signs of anticipation for a rivalry that has taken its place as one of the classics in college football.

To fans in the two states, it simply means the preliminaries are over and the serious work of settling the annual score between college football's Hatfields and McCoys is about to begin.

It has been a series of classics, played with the outcome of championships —

both conference and national — weighing heavily on the shoulders of the competing players.

It's been a series that has featured pulse-pounding comebacks and individual heroics as well as goal-line stands and long-distance scores in equal number.

Heisman Trophy recipients have run through holes created by Outland winners only to then be tackled by Lombardi honorees. More All-Americans have run into each other than many post-season all-star games could hope to

feature.

For some fans, the game itself has become an obsession, a measuring stick for the entire season.

Each victory is a treasured prize, each loss a sobering end to a season of hopes.

It's only one game in a season, and one series in a lifetime of opponents, but each Oklahoma-Nebraska game seems to arrive with such importance, such relevance.

The series has been a glorious one from the outset. Through World War I and the Depression, Nebraska held a sizable advantage over its less successful rival to the south, losing only three of the first 22 games.

But then came the era of Bud Wilkinson, and the Sooners owned the Huskers along with the rest of the league. In those days, a Nebraska win was cited as an example of David slaying Goliath. And on a few occasions, Nebraska did just that, such as in 1959 when the unheralded Huskers ended the Sooners' phenomenal 74-game conference winning streak with a 25-21 win.

In the 1960s Nebraska returned to its winning ways under the guidance of Bob Devaney and the Huskers were able to trade wins with the Sooners.

Devaney won a pair of national championships in 1970 and 1971, and both were consecrated in part with wins over the Sooners. The 1970 Huskers exhibited a grit that would surface time and again as they held off a last second OU drive by intercepting a pass in the end zone to beat Oklahoma, 28-21.

That same grit was burned in the memory of every Husker fan the next year as Nebraska and Oklahoma met in one of the few ballyhooed "Games of the Century" that truly left everyone who saw or listened to it convinced that the title was apt.



Jerry Tagge (14) and the Huskers had the talent edge in '71 and it made all the difference.

Back and forth, the two teams went at each other in a furious battle for the nation's top ranking. Nebraska jumped out early on Johnny Rodgers' immortal punt return. The Sooners discovered the forward pass and came back to take the lead. Rodgers made a sliding catch of a crucial third-down pass to keep alive the game-winning drive. And Jeff Kinney bruised over for the last of his four touchdowns to give the Huskers a victory for all-time, 35-31.

These two Nebraska wins not only boosted the Huskers to their national championships, they also crystalized a trend in the series that has held true, with perhaps one or two memorable exceptions to this date.

The team with the best athletes has won the game.

It sounds so cold, so simple, but the fact remains that when these two powerhouses get together, there is rarely an upset.

The two schools have seemingly gone in cycles since the series became competitive again with the arrival of Devaney. From 1966-68 Oklahoma was on top, followed by Nebraska from 1969-71. The Sooners then had their way from 1972 until the Huskers snuck up on them in 1978. After that, the Sooners won three straight — two in the regular season, in addition to a win in an Orange Bowl rematch after the 1978 season. Nebraska then took three straight from 1981-83, and the Sooners have won four straight since.

What caused these cycles? The players each school put on the field. It's not that the opposing school necessarily did a bad job with its recruiting. Just look to the fact that both schools have consistently placed talent in the NFL. But each school has enjoyed its success because the quality athletes it sent on to the field had the ability to make the key plays.

When Oklahoma had running backs such as Joe Washington and Billy Sims to go along with defenders such as Lee Roy and Dewey and Lucious Selmon, they held the advantage.

When Nebraska was able to send running backs such as Roger Craig and Mike Rozier into battle, the Sooners were sent to unfamiliar surroundings for their bowl game holidays.

Just look at the record book. In the last 25 games, the team with the most players selected to the All-Big Eight team has won 18 times. Of course, all-star honors don't provide the definitive answer to the question of who will win. So many variables come into play. For example, a great junior on one team may not get all-conference recognition because of a great senior from another squad. And that doesn't mean the young

player isn't very talented.

Only twice in the 1980s has the team with fewer All-Big Eight performers won.

As much as Nebraska fans might cringe at the memory of the Sooners pulling out one of their come-from-behind wins, Oklahoma fans equally recall Rozier's runs to put Nebraska back in front during his tenure.

Perhaps the 1983 game best exempli-

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fies the cycles of the series.

For Nebraska fans the Oklahoma game is always the focal point of a season, yet for a while in the mid- to late-1970s there were contentions out of the Sooner camp that the OU-Texas game, with all its potential recruiting advantages, was a bigger game. Many of the Sooners were from Texas and many potential recruits from that area would be watching.

But by 1983, the Sooners had lost to Nebraska in back-to-back years and heading into the game, the Huskers were the ones who were stealing the headlines. Nebraska's offensive juggernaut rolled into Norman already assured of the Orange Bowl bid and Rozier was heading toward a conference rushing record and the Heisman Trophy. The Sooners proclaimed this their bowl game and the stage was set, although the roles were reversed.

Nebraska, the favorite, rolled to an early lead, but the Sooners received the spark that all underdogs need when faced with a difficult task when Danny Bradley hit Buster Rhymes with a long touchdown pass. But Rozier answered with a long run to set up a tying touchdown.

Later, Spencer Tillman made the kind of superhuman effort for a touchdown that always seems to happen when an upset is imminent, flying the last 5 yards to put OU up again. But back came Rozier on a 62-yard gallop to set up a short run by Turner Gill. The Huskers had tied the game back up in less than a minute.

Nebraska's big plays proved to be the difference in a 28-21 win, and those plays as all the big ones in this series, were made by the team with the best athletes.

There have been few exceptions to the rule.

One, of course, was the Huskers' epic 17-14 win in 1978 that knocked the Sooners out of the top spot in the national rankings. The Sooners had the magic of Billy Sims, on his way to winning the Heisman, but that magic was overcome on this day by the collective efforts of an entire Nebraska team, which forced key mistakes by the Sooners while holding their own to a minimum.

The subsequent Orange Bowl

rematch, however, provided OU with revenge and only clarified for historians that the 1978 team may have been the best Oklahoma team never to win a national crown.

Even though OU was ranked higher than Nebraska in the polls prior to the 1976 game, Sooner optimism was guarded at best, prompting the now-famous Sooner prayer, "Please, God, don't let the best team win." Despite losing to Colorado and Oklahoma State (Husker victims), OU won by three points in Lincoln.

Was that really an upset? It could be argued forever.

Then in 1984, Nebraska had the nation's top-rated defense and Oklahoma was just recovering from its second, bizarre upset by Kansas within a decade. NU held a slight lead in the wire service polls, but the Sooners won on a memorable goal-line stand and went to the Orange Bowl for an outside shot at the national championship. However, BYU dashed those hopes, and the Big Red of the north, 10-2 after the Sugar Bowl, was several notches ahead of OU, 9-2-1, in the final polls.

Was that an upset? Maybe so, considering the Sooner bunch featured many young titans who would propel Barry Switzer's 1985 team to the national title.

And technically, Nebraska was favored in 1987 by the oddsmakers.

That '87 shocker perhaps exemplifies the best-athlete theory. Oklahoma sent 13 players through the NFL draft a few months later, and several other Sooners were signed as free agents. No other college football team last season had as many draftees.

So the underdog can win these games, but the big problem many times has been identifying the underdog. For much of the past decade both teams have come into the contest near the top of the rankings. All the old cliches get tossed about, and the record book goes flying out the window.

There really isn't a home field advantage to speak of. Nebraska has won two of the last three in Norman, OU has won three straight in Lincoln.

The only thing for certain is that the game will be played.

And the best team will win. ■



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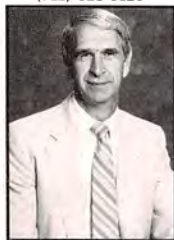
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